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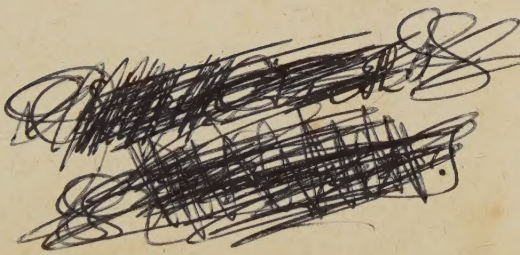

THE

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE

OF

THE ATONEMENT

As a Satisfaction made to God for the Sins of the World

BY

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TO THE

Rev. Dr. Moulton

TO WHOM IT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO LIVE
NOT ONLY IN HIS OWN GREAT WORK, BUT, BY
HIS GENEROUS ENCOURAGEMENT, WISE COUNSEL, AND
UNFAILING HELP,
IN THE BEST ACHIEVEMENTS OF MANY OTHERS

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR
WITH DEEP GRATITUDE AND REVERENT
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PREFACE

In sending forth this volume, a word of apology is necessary. Those who know the constant pressure and the unceasing round of practical duties which are inseparable from the headship of a Settlement among the poor will be aware under what difficulties this book has been produced. I can hardly hope to have altogether avoided falling into mistakes which greater leisure would have enabled me to detect. The treatment of the subjects dealt with in chapters vi. and vii. is necessarily incomplete. To have attempted an exhaustive consideration would have been to transgress the limits imposed upon the writer. But some discussion both of our Lord's ethical perfection and of His relationship to the human race was demanded, if only to exhibit clearly the general point of view from which, throughout this Lecture, the Atonement has been regarded.

I cannot refrain from expressing here my sense of the great debt which, under God, I owe to Dr. W. B. Pope for any light that has been given to me upon the meaning of our Lord's death. Many will remember with unceasing gratitude how constantly he dwelt upon the

great Obedience, with a profound thought only equalled by his profound devotion. I desire, also, to acknowledge my obligation to Dr. A. M. Fairbairn for the treatment in his great work, *Christ in Modern Theology*, of the questions connected with the Incarnation. To Dr. Moulton I am deeply indebted for the care with which he read my manuscript, and for the invaluable suggestions he made. It is due to his generous encouragement that I have been enabled to complete the book at this time, and in its present form. At every critical stage of my active life his guidance has been unfailing, and by it, more than by any other human influence, the course of my ministerial work has been shaped.

In preparing the Appendix, I have consulted the usual histories of doctrine, and have been assisted by Oxenham's *Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement*, though, of course, his standpoint differs widely from mine. But my account of the history of the doctrine is the result for the most part of independent reading. I have adopted the translations of Messrs. T. & T. Clark's *Ante-Nicene Library*, where these have been available; and the extracts from Gregory the Great are taken from the *Library of the Fathers*. Otherwise, I am responsible for the translations.

In conclusion, I would offer my grateful thanks to several friends whose kindly assistance has greatly reduced the mechanical labour of getting the book ready for the press.

And now, though deeply conscious how imperfectly I have treated a subject which surpasses the highest human thought, I send forth what I have written, in the humble hope that thoughts which have brought light and strength to me amid the practical duties of a busy life may, by God's blessing, be of some service to others, and especially to those who have found it hard to reconcile the satisfaction of the cross with the fatherly love of God.

J. SCOTT LIDGETT.

BERMONDSEY SETTLEMENT.

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THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE OF THE ATONEMENT

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

For a number of years comparatively little attention has been given by British theology to the doctrine of the Atonement. No doubt valuable contributions have been made to the subject, but it can hardly be said that any work has largely influenced the religious world since the publication of the late Dr. Dale's *Lectures on the Atonement.* The reasons for this neglect appear to be threefold; namely, repulsion from many of the accounts hitherto given by theologians, despair as to the possibility of arriving at a satisfactory conclusion, and absorption in other pursuits of religious and theological inquiry.

1. As to the first. Repulsion is a hard word to use where investigation into the meaning of the death of Christ is concerned. Its awfulness arrests attention, its unspeakable condescension constrains to worship and thanksgiving, and faith instinctively rests upon it as the ground of confidence towards God, in the case of

multitudes who yet refuse to enter into its precise nature and its reasons. But none the less, repulsion from the theological inquiry is as real as the homage of worship and faith in presence of the redemptive fact. And the reasons for this attitude are not far to seek. In part this aversion may be due to the shallowness of an age which is supposed to have lost its interest in theology. But far more is it caused by the fact that those who have penetrated into the subject, as it has ordinarily been presented, have immediately been confronted by considerations drawn from the sphere of human jurisprudence or of governmental interests. And these considerations are not only remote from, but distasteful to the common mind, carrying us into a sphere which is felt to be foreign and even antagonistic to both the simple life of faith and the graciousness of the gospel. If these difficulties are overcome, others remain to be encountered. The dogmatic schemes which have been propounded seem to satisfy every relationship between God and men except those which the Christian man, at any rate in these days, feels to be most precious and most real. To explain the Atonement from every standpoint save that of these relationships is for him either to leave it unexplained, or to give an explanation from which he would gladly turn his mind. And this all the more when he finds, further, that the explanations offered to him often offend either his heart by not only ignoring, but even running counter to its most cherished experiences of the loving tenderness of God, or his reverence by their vulgar use of commercial analogies, or his reason by their artificiality. This, or example, is the case, in all three respects, with the doc-

trine that the sufferings endured by our Lord are necessarily equivalent, in nature and degree, to those which would otherwise have been endured by the redeemed—whether this view be stated in the language of the law court or in that of the market. But in the case of many accounts, which in themselves are less extreme, similar difficulties are felt, and especially on the ground of the artificial nature of the so called divine transaction. This artificiality pertains in part to the relations between the Father and the Son, as represented in such schemes; but yet more to the way in which the Atonement has apparently been taken out of the hands of the living God and committed to certain of His attributes, especially justice and mercy, which, at least in popular usage, have been almost personified, and set bargaining one with the other as to what should be demanded and offered as a satisfaction for sin. Meanwhile what is necessary, not to the majesty of God or to the interests of justice, but in the spiritual interests of those who are to be redeemed, has been overlooked in the explanations, with the inevitable result that men, not seeing the atoning sacrifice to be intrinsically related to the spiritual well-being of sinners, have asked whether it could not have been dispensed with, whether regard for His own majesty, or even for abstract claims of justice, could be paramount in the heart of God. Men have felt themselves baffled at being repelled by attributes when they would deal with God, or by being told in the last resort that the principles of justice, or the requirements of majesty, as recognised by and prevailing among men, make that necessary for God which they themselves, as they think, would in His place (if the supposi-

tion may be pardoned) be willing to forego. It is this that explains the great hold which Dr. Dale's treatment has gained over evangelical thought. He did his first service by brushing aside with his vigorous and business-like intellect the sophisms of those who seemed to be twisting or concealing the plain teaching of Scripture as to the necessity of the death of Christ in order to the forgiveness of men. His readers, therefore, found the assurance of their faith in this matter amply vindicated. But he did more; he relieved them of their greatest difficulty. He carried them past the attributes of God to God Himself; and he gave an account of satisfaction which destroyed all appearance of its being arbitrary, and showed how the sacrifice demanded was not an exaction by God, but an act of homage paid by Him, in His Triune glory, to an eternal law of righteousness, to the inflexibility of which the rigour of the demand was due, and not to any lack of tenderness or self-sacrifice in the mind of God. Such was the value of the result, and probably those who felt its relief did not seriously trouble themselves as to whether the process by which it was attained could speculatively be maintained.

2. Equally real in many quarters has been the despair of arriving at any satisfactory conclusion on the subject of the Atonement. This feeling has become widely diffused. Practically, it makes men turn from mysteries which are too high for them to the general contemplation and proclamation of God's love, to the humanitarian aspects of Christ's life, and to the everyday interests of Christian morality. But here, as elsewhere, what is vaguely held by the many has been theoretically set forth by the few. Of late the

attempts to justify the position, that any explanation of the grounds and nature of the Atonement is beyond reach, have been remarkably numerous; and these by representatives of very different schools of general theological thought.[1] The excuse for such despair lies in the bewildering variety of explanations that have been given, and the apparently successful criticism of most of them by the advocates of the rest. That appearance is partially deceptive. Those who look carefully into the leading accounts will find that they are complementary one to another, that each represents a real aspect of the whole, and that they are mutually exclusive chiefly because of their exaggerations of the aspects which they represent, and because of the absence of a living principle sufficiently supreme and comprehensive to unite and harmonize them all. But it requires much patience to realise this, and not to retire in disgust from the sounds of controversy.

There is another cause which some who advocate the abandonment of effort to understand the Atonement have not clearly recognised as being present, but which is manifestly there. Christ "suffered for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous." Suffering, sin, the apparent inequities of human life, are the supreme problems which harass human thought. To the question, Why? in regard to each of them, a completely satisfactory answer has hardly been given; or, if so, it has not secured general assent. The perplexity as to why sin was allowed invades the question why Christ died for it; the question why suffering has been permitted at all enters into the inquiry why Christ suffered; and the glory of Christ's self-devotion does not altogether

[1] For a critical account of such attempts, see Appendix, Note.

exclude the inquiry why injustice is permitted. It is possible to forget the universality of these difficulties, and to see them so concentrated in the cross of Christ that *it* becomes a mystery, because *they* have not altogether been explained. The mistake lies in not seeing that whatever mystery there may be, is with them, and that, given the facts of the world as they are, the cross is intelligible in their light.

3. But perhaps more influential than either of these causes has been the pre-occupation of men's minds with other theological and religious interests. This generation has come to apprehend, as no other has done, the Fatherhood of God. His compassionateness in its depth and universality, both as embracing all men and as concerned with the whole round of human interests, has been realised as never before, and has inspired evangelic appeal and social effort. Too often, perhaps, His Fatherhood and His compassionateness have been treated as almost convertible terms. This apprehension of the Fatherhood of God has involved various subsidiary lines of thought, for which material has at the same time accumulated. The universal Fatherhood necessitates a philosophy of religion, and has therefore directed attention to the problem of the relation of Christianity to other religions. Hence the comparative study of religions has possessed an equal attraction for the theologian and for the scientific inquirer.

Again, this age has seen the awakening of the desire to rediscover the historic Christ. The humanity of our Lord has had a new interest. For many reasons this has been so. The growth of the historical spirit and the accumulation of historical information made it impossible to ignore the greatest figure in history. The very effort to uphold

the evidence of the gospel against those who attacked it could succeed only by establishing the historical reality of the facts of the gospel, and showing what manner of man the Christ really was. And there was delight in the results of such investigations. The arid discussions of metaphysical theology, the one-sided emphasis laid upon our Lord's Divinity, the overlaying of His person by abstract statements as to His work, all gave deeper joy and a sense of relief to the new acquaintance with Him as He was, the homely Prophet, with His band of humble followers, and to His words and deeds as seen in the clear atmosphere of their natural surroundings. Hence the attraction of the different attempts to write His "life," and to show the gradual unfolding of His ministry and teaching. Nor has this tendency been limited by historical interests. It has had in addition an ethical inspiration. Men have sought to find the spiritual and moral principles embodied in the life of Christ and uttered in His teaching, in order to apply them to the changed conditions and to the spiritual and social perplexities of their own times. And with the increased interest in the ethical meaning of our Lord's life has been associated an increased conviction of the ethical meaning of salvation in ours. This tendency has taken different shapes, and has growing strength. Thus by different paths men have been brought to recognise the solidarity of mankind in and with Christ, to realise that He is the embodiment and expression of the true life of which the beginnings exist in all men through the indwelling of His Spirit. And, once more, a new prominence has been given by the devout to conscious personal union and fellowship with the living Christ by participation in

His Spirit, which has sometimes, perhaps, too much withdrawn their thought from His objective work to His spiritual indwelling. All these tendencies—human, moral, mystical—have combined to place the doctrine of the Atonement in the background.

But they all create a new necessity for examining the subject, and afford new means for advancing towards a solution. They make some of the old explanations more difficult; and the difficulty thus created needs to be faced all the more, because what they bring forward, apart from incidental exaggerations, consists not of questionable propositions advanced by unbelievers, but of distinct elements of biblical teaching which have not hitherto received their due. Men require to know what is the relation of the Atonement to the Fatherhood of God, and why, if He be so compassionate, He demands the sacrifice in order to the forgiveness of sins. Their sense of the naturalness of the death of Christ causes them to turn away from any doctrine which makes it *mechanically* supernatural. The ethical content of His sufferings looms larger than the sufferings themselves. They feel that in His death, as in His life, He was the ideal Man. And before they accept any doctrine of substitution, they insist that it shall not be so understood as to leave the Atonement unrelated to the expression of the universal Godward life of the race for whom it is offered.

It is the object of these pages to endeavour to give effect to the truth in these tendencies of thought, and to show their harmony with the belief that the Atonement is a dealing with God on behalf of men. It is certain that the old doctrine of satisfaction must be

revised in their light, and that some alteration must thereby come to our views of its necessity and nature. This is only what has happened once and again in times past, with the progress of theological thought and the fuller apprehension of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. But the revision will not lead to the abandonment of the conviction that the death of Christ was a satisfaction for the sins of men, but will rather bring home with greater cogency how necessary, and in the truest sense natural, is the demand, and how spiritual and glorious is its fulfilment. Each new element of thought, properly understood, may be used to bring out more fully the many-sided teaching of the New Testament as to the death of Christ, as well as the meaning of the spirit and principles of those Old Testament sacrifices which have been adopted and consummated by the New. Our search will therefore be for the spiritual principle of the Atonement, considered as a satisfaction offered to God for the sins of the world.

In order to discover it, we must, in the first place, inquire into the historical cause of our Lord's death, partly because no explanation of it which is either contrary or inadequate to the facts can stand, and partly because the surest revelation of the meaning of His death will be found in what the death actually was as a spiritual and natural event. We must then study the biblical doctrine of the Atonement in order to discover what it is, and how far it is in accordance with the historical fact. This will prepare the way for the consideration of the relationship of God to men, in its connexion with the redemptive facts; so that from the relationship and the facts, taken in conjunc-

tion one with another, the questions may be answered as to the ends sought in the satisfaction, and the means of their attainment. The complete carrying out of this last inquiry will necessitate a previous survey of the leading explanations which have been given of the death of Christ, and a supplementary discussion of the questions which have to do with our Lord's mediatorial relationship to the race, and the connexion of His death with its spiritual life. It is hoped that the course of the investigation may do something at once to enlist in the exposition of the Atonement those influences of theological thought which have diverted attention from it, even when they have not opposed it; to show that, while the solution may not be immediate, there need be no despair of eventually arriving at it; and to bring home to those who have been repelled by the technicalities, the abstractions, and the illegitimate analogies of much bygone teaching, that in the light of the Holy Scriptures no subject is so gracious, despite its awfulness, as that of the sacrifice of Christ.

We proceed at once to consider the historical cause of the death of Christ.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL CAUSE OF OUR LORD'S DEATH

THE immediate cause of our Lord's death was the combined agency of the priests, of Pilate the Roman governor, of Judas, and of the multitude, and not only their personal combination, but the joint action of their characteristic shortcomings and vices. The jealousy of the priestly party and their wounded pride, thinly veneered by a concern for the imperilled interests of the Church and of the truth as they understood them, co-operated with the treachery and greed of Judas, with the inability of Pilate to interest himself in or to understand the points at issue, with his carelessness about the fate of an idealist like Christ, and his cowardly fear to withstand a popular clamour, born of the knowledge of his own deserved unpopularity, and with the acquiescence of the multitude,—even the active sympathy of its more noisy elements,—an acquiescence brought about by those confused impressions which so often make mobs a tool in the hands of the perpetrators of crime. Of all these, the one really potent factor was the hatred of the ecclesiastical party, not only because they were the organisers of the whole conspiracy, and because the weight of their authority in such a matter prevailed with Pilate, but because the ecclesiastical and dogmatic grounds of their hatred had probably something to do with producing

in the mind of Judas the contempt for and aversion from Christ which made it possible for him to betray Him, and because these grounds were more or less sympathised with by the mob of Jerusalem.

What, then, had awakened this enmity in the minds of the ecclesiastical leaders and of those who sympathised with them? To some extent it was the ordinary provocation given to an ecclesiastical order, jealous for its own prestige and influence, by an independent spiritual leader. But this alone would not have affected the crowd had there not been, in addition, grounds of general offence, created partly by disappointed hopes and partly by conscientious disapproval, which, felt more or less really by the priestly caste, were used by them as a cloak for their baser motives, and as a means of securing the support of many who would have been lukewarm about a mere matter of ecclesiastical hate. The gospel narratives give abundant information as to these special causes of enmity; and they may be stated without distinguishing particularly between those which peculiarly affected the ecclesiastical instinct and those which were of wider significance.

First of all was our Lord's great authority, which profoundly impressed the multitudes who listened to Him. St. Matthew tells us: "The multitudes were astonished at His teaching: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes" (Matt. vii. 28, 29).

It was on this point that He was challenged by the priests on His last visit to Jerusalem. "By what authority," they asked Him, "doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority?" (Matt. xxi. 23.)

To a generation given over to slavish following of traditions, and to the counting and weighing of great names for every opinion which they ventured to put forward and every practice which they followed, the positive declarations of a direct spiritual intuition, announced on the ground of that intuition, were positively shocking. And this was the more so because He who claimed this authority had no ecclesiastical pedigree, had come from no theological school, made no pretence to any training in the law which they could recognise, but, on the contrary, sprang "as a root out of a dry ground" from despised Galilee (John vii. 52), and had there had the audacity—in their judgment—to gather around Himself a following of disciples, whose adhesion foreshadowed the permanence of an irregular spiritual movement. Moreover, it was not only His claim to authority, and His irregular founding of a new school, despised for its ignorance, though feared for its self-assertion, but there was also the growing influence of this new Master with the people, based on His teaching and His miracles. This is once and again stated by St. John to have been a ground of alarm with the chief priests and the Pharisees. Hence their deliberations, "If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him" (John xi. 47, 48), and the despairing cry, "Behold how ye prevail nothing: lo, the world is gone after Him" (John xii. 19).

Yet all this might have worn a less dangerous aspect had the substance and spirit of our Lord's teaching been in general accordance with that which was commonly received; but it was not so. It is true that our Lord Himself observed the law, and that He at once disappointed

any who might have hoped for laxity in Him by His prompt declaration, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v. 17). But His spirit in all this was the precise opposite of the ecclesiastical leaders. They treated particular precepts, observances, and traditions as the absolute rulers of the spiritual life, to be amplified, enshrined, and obeyed at the cost of the utter sacrifice of reason and reasonableness, of higher moral concerns, and of all spiritual independence and progress. Our Lord's principle, on the other hand, was that all these things were made for man and not man for them (Mark ii. 27). It could not be long before such a contrariety of principle led to a divergence of practice; and this took place especially as to the observance of the sabbath, an institution which at the time was held in superstitious reverence, and fenced round by artificial and childish regulations that destroyed the great spiritual ends for which it was ordained. Again and again we are told of controversies between our Lord and the Pharisees on this subject, called forth both by His own works of healing and by the freedom of behaviour practised by His disciples (Matt. xii. 1–13). And, doubtless, the revolutionary principle by which He justified His treatment of the sabbath was felt by His opponents to be, both in itself and to His own consciousness, of universal application.

Moreover, the freedom which our Lord asserted in matters of religious observance He exhibited also in His dealings with men. There can be no doubt that His relations with publicans and sinners were genuinely offensive to the conventional morality of the ordinary

religious world, and brought Him into a general disrepute with it, which gave all the freer play to more virulent feelings of hate.

Finally, our Lord not only reared upon His own authority a system of teaching, the spirit of which was intrinsically abhorrent to the ecclesiastical leaders of His time, but He applied it in constant criticism of the traditions which were worshipped, and of the interpretations of the law and of tradition given by the scribes. He was not content to allow the incompatibility between His teaching and theirs to be inferred; He pressed it home. Proofs of this are too numerous and familiar to need quotation. He went beyond even this, according to St. John, if the general understanding of the associations connected with John vii. 37 and viii. 12 holds good. He treated all the rites and observances, which were celebrated with the greatest solemnity, as fulfilled and well-nigh superseded by Himself. At the Feast of Tabernacles the priests bear the holy water in procession through the temple, and Jesus cries, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink." They light the sacred candelabra, and He cries, "I am the light of the world." Such examples help to explain the saying which was first perverted and then used against Him, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Matt. xxvi. 61, Mark xiv. 58, John ii. 19), showing how our Lord identified Himself with the temple and all that the temple contained. To crown all, our Lord seized the moment when all these causes of offence were operating with the greatest intensity to deliver His terrible indictment of the scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites, contained

in Matthew xxiii. The effect was instantaneous; had our Lord satisfied the Messianic ideals of the populace, the rage of the priestly party might have been rendered powerless; but He was as disappointing to these expectations of the people as He was hateful to the priests on theological, ecclesiastical, and personal grounds. His conception of His kingdom was so spiritual, made it rest so entirely upon individual spiritual relations to Himself, that it was the highest test of the moral worth even of His disciples, driving away the more worldly-minded among them. Hence there was no organised support to set against the conspiracy of the priests. Motives of orthodoxy, ecclesiastical policy, the safeguarding of their imperilled ascendency, and the desire of revenge for their wounded pride,—all impelled these last. The opportunity was given them by the treachery of Judas, and once having taken it, the more respectable reasons for their hatred fell into the background, leaving the field to a ruthless and cruel rage which eagerly grasped any weapon by which its end might be attained. Perjured witnesses, the ready adoption of any *argumentum ad hominem* which might overcome the scruples of Pilate, however inconsistent it might be with their most sacred convictions,—all these did their part. And the crucifixion was the result.

But when we look closer, we shall see how inevitable this conflict was, how directly every ground of offence given by our Lord was rooted in His spiritual consciousness, and how the spiritual consciousness from which they all thus directly sprang was just that filial consciousness which enabled Him to reveal the Father to men. Our

Lord's conceptions of Himself and His mission, of the world and man, of redemption, and of the kingdom of God, were determined by His knowledge of the Father and of Himself as the Son. His first utterance of self-revelation proclaims this knowledge: "Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house," or "business?" (Luke ii. 49.) The great temptation turns upon it, upon the principles of conduct which befit and fulfil the spirit of sonship; and the victory gained in the temptation lay in this, that the spiritual insight and unfailing fidelity of the Son led Him to discern and to hold fast that essential spirit in face of the plausibilities of the tempter, and to make it deliberately His own. The spirit in which our Lord met the temptation, the principles He laid bare in refuting the tempter, are those which visibly determine the whole conduct of His life. A mission from the Father to manifest the life of His Son, accomplishing the Father's work, trusting in the Father's word, waiting upon the Father's times, in allegiance to the Father's authority and law, this was the spirit which in the temptation our Lord manifested and maintained as His own, this was the spirit which moulded and inspired His life.

But at once that spirit of Sonship carried with it consequences of the most practical and far-reaching kind. First of all, it made our Lord independent of all authority for Himself, and the fount of a new authority for mankind. "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 27). Not that His independence of authority was unheeding,

careless of deliverances of the Spirit of God made in the past, or even in the present, to others; such a spirit, indeed, would have been unfilial, and contrary to the breadth of sympathy of the Son of man. It is disproved by the whole tenor of His life, by His hearing of the doctors in His youth, by His recourse to the Scriptures in the temptation, by His observance of the law throughout His ministry. But He interpreted all texts, observed all rites, heeded all judgments, in the light of and for the ends of His own Sonship, abandoning them when inconsistent with it, honouring them when true to it. In everything His Sonship, and therefore His consciousness of direct and immediate relationship to God, was the final authority for Himself and for mankind, on the ground both of that direct filial relationship to God, and of the absolute perfection of the teaching which revealed to men the secrets of God's nature and of their own as realised by Christ.

Hence, naturally, our Lord's freedom of spirit in His conduct towards men, towards institutions, and towards observances. St. Paul reads this to be the first characteristic of the Spirit of Christ: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. iii. 17). And this liberty is not theoretic or emotional, but practical. The filial spirit is under the law to God, but is free from subservience to the prejudices and fashions of men, from the baser hopes and fears which cause men to shape their conduct with a view to earthly reputation. Again, St. Paul reads the law of Christ's spirit: "If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ" (Gal. i. 10). The spirit of freedom as regards men, lawless as it sometimes seems to those who are not in possession of it, is

the counterpart of implicit obedience to the Father. The two are inseparable. Hence Christ's independence was a necessary outcome of His perfect obedience. But the enemies with whom He had to do were shocked by the independence, and could not appreciate the obedience. The higher spirit of Christ must of necessity express itself in conduct so different as to be simply revolutionary to those who were out of sympathy, or rather were beneath sympathy, with that spirit. Again, directly the world, man, the words of God, God Himself, were seen in the light of the divine Fatherhood, there came into being the new spirituality of the divine-human life, in all its depth and breadth. That our Lord's life and teaching are at once irradiated with divinity and yet informed with the broadest humanity, is due simply to the influence of His realised divine Sonship in human nature, which brings the consciousness of the Father into all things, and at the same time finds a consecration for all things which are natural and human, because created and ordained by and for the ends of fatherly love. A more intimate and all-pervasive relation of God to life is brought about; a new sense that the natural and human, because begotten of Him, is part of and the way to the divine. The Fatherhood brings together the divine and the human, the supernatural and the natural, the sacred and the secular, insuring the victory of the divine by the perfecting of the human. Hence the inwardness and yet the naturalness of our Lord's new law and of His interpretations of the old law. Both the inwardness and the breadth stand out in the Sermon on the Mount; and it is no accident that they are there side by side with the most explicit and reiterated

assertion of the Fatherhood of God, with the determination by that relationship of the spirit of prayer, of such religious duties as almsgiving and fasting, of the moral temper which should govern human relations after the perfection of the Father, and of the kingdom of heaven.

The originality of our Lord Jesus Christ as a teacher is to be found not so much in this saying or that; indeed, the attempts to establish it in this way are in many respects disappointing. They can be partially met by the commonplace diligence which ransacks the world of religion and thought to bring together a miscellaneous assortment of golden sayings which may rank with those of Christ. Even in face of these His pre-eminence may be established; but when it has been done, the result has an unsatisfactory look. And the reason is, that the whole point of the matter has been missed. The originality of our Lord is to be found in the body of His teaching, as an organic whole held together by great vitalising principles; yet more, in that this organic whole is not merely theoretic or hortative, but unfolds a unique spiritual consciousness, and makes that consciousness the key to the world of thought and duty for our Lord and for His followers. And the constitutive principle, both of the life which determines the consciousness and of the consciousness which gives expression to the life, is the Fatherhood of God, shaping, vitalising, giving coherence and consistency to the whole. Thus it was the filial consciousness which was the direct creator of our Lord's teaching, and brought it not only into the sharpest contrast with, but into direct and deadly antagonism to that of the scribes.

So again it is with our Lord's relations to the common

people and to the publicans and sinners. While our Lord always distinguishes between His own Sonship and that of others, yet the Fatherhood of God and His own Sonship is the norm after which the relation of God to men and men to God is patterned. Our Lord's Sonship is revealed in human nature, and hence is the revelation of the general filial constitution and possibilities of human nature; a revelation of human nature which is confirmed for our Lord by His sense of headship, union, and fellowship conveyed by the title which He so constantly uses,—the *Son of man.* The common humanity which links Him to all men is the assurance of the sacredness and worth of all men; and by the recognition of that His attitude towards publicans and sinners is explained and justified.

Finally, the apprehension of the Fatherhood of God transforms the idea of the kingdom of God. It can no longer be merely external, miraculous, and beneficently despotic, but must be inward, spiritual, and individual. When our Lord teaches us to pray, "Thy kingdom come," the prayer is directed to *our Father* who is in heaven; and the nature of the kingdom is determined by the nature and relationship of the Father, whose it is. Hence the kingdom can only come by the extension in individuals of the filial spirit, and of all that is involved in that spirit. The possibilities are divinely implanted, and the task of redemption is to realise them. This is the work of the Christ, and by it the victory of His kingdom is to be won. This, then, is the ground of the doctrine of salvation by individual discipleship, and of discipleship as the means of entering the kingdom, of which the gospels are full. Thus our conclusion is reached, that all the special grounds of offence

given by our Lord to the Jews sprang by necessary consequence from His unique realisation of the Fatherhood of God and of His own Sonship.

But the conflict being thus inevitable, the next question is as to the way in which it was waged. Did our Lord so shape His conduct towards the hostile ecclesiastical rulers that His course can throughout be vindicated as taken in obedience to the Father, and as a manifestation of the true life of His Son? Or was His career, especially at its close,—as has been alleged,—so marked by wilfulness, ostentation, by an unjustifiable and therefore immoral, determination to provoke the anger of His enemies, and thereby to rush on death, as effectually to disprove any claim to moral perfection made on His behalf? Was our Lord justified in taking His last journey to Jerusalem and thus bringing Himself within reach of His foes? And if so, can we give the same answer concerning His entry into Jerusalem, His violent clearing of the temple, and His terrible indictment of the scribes and Pharisees which raised their passion against Him to fever heat? To have to name such charges and to discuss them cannot but be painful to believers in our Lord. The responsibility of raising the discussion must be borne by those who have impugned His conduct. But when once their objections have been raised,—and in a serious spirit,—it becomes the duty of Christians to face them, on account both of their loyalty to their Lord and of their care for those whose faith may be thereby imperilled. Belief in our Lord's perfection will in such circumstances best be shown by our patiently endeavouring to exhibit the perfectness of His words and deeds. By this it will be

made plain that "wisdom is justified of her children," and even the objections urged,—painful as the discussion of them must be,—will only serve eventually to set in clearer light the spiritual glory of our Lord.

Coming, then, to the objections raised by the allegations in question, it will be seen that they are of the most vital importance to our subject. If reckless disregard of His own life, or a wanton resolution to secure His own murder, on the part of our Lord, co-operated with the vices of the other actors to bring about the great tragedy, then, with the condemnation of our Lord's conduct must go not only all faith in His sinlessness, but all possibility of His death being acceptable to God, and therefore the means of reconciliation for mankind. Whatever the essential principle of the sacrifice, it must at least be brought about without any contributory wrongdoing by the victim. And if a real difficulty exist, it will not be a satisfactory answer to say that our Lord was not amenable to the laws of ordinary human morality, or that His death was so necessary for the salvation of mankind that He was justified in deliberately compassing it. The former answer would expressly destroy the human nature of our Lord, by making all our standards of conduct inapplicable to Him; the latter would be open to the same objection, while it would, in addition, empty His death of ethical significance by reducing it to a mechanical necessity, and tend in a measure not only to His exoneration, but also to that of His murderers. A new interpretation must then be put upon our Lord's prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"; and it must be held that if they had had a clearer knowledge of the meaning of Christ's

death, they would have been blameless for bringing it about. It is therefore by principles of universal validity that our Lord's conduct must be tested, and, in particular, by the obligations of His ministry, not by any external necessity of sacrificing His life. Can our Lord's righteousness be established from this standpoint? In order to deal with this question, His going up to Jerusalem and His behaviour while there must be separately considered.

1. Was our Lord justified in taking His last journey to Jerusalem, instead of remaining in the safety of Galilee, when well aware of the risk He thereby incurred? We have only to remember what was involved in His being in possession of the absolute truth to answer that not only was He justified in doing so, but that He was bound to do as He did. The knowledge of the Father, with all its consequences, was a sacred trust given to our Lord for the redemption of the world. He was the "true and faithful witness," thereby achieving the supreme fulfilment of a common duty resting upon all men to manifest the truth of God, as it is made known to them. But, as we have seen, the theological and ecclesiastical system predominant at Jerusalem was the exact antithesis of the spirit of Christ. And it was enthroned "in Moses' seat," commanding by its authority the religion of the whole people. If the truth was to prevail, its victory could only be won by confronting and deposing that which counterfeited it and usurped its place. To shrink from uttering the truth just where it was set at naught, to hide it in a safe obscurity from fear of the conflict necessary for its triumph and the personal danger to be encountered, to be satisfied with founding for it a Galilæan sect instead of a worldwide dominion, would

have been to be either unmindful of its claims or a traitor to them.

The same thing is true when we regard our Lord not only as the Revealer of the truth, but as the Shepherd and King of men. How could He for the sake of personal safety leave them a prey to hirelings and usurpers? The Messianic consciousness of Christ made this utterly impossible.

But, further, if loyalty to the truth could have permitted our Lord to remain in Galilee, and if His love for the souls of men could have been satisfied with a little band of disciples, even so limited an aim must have been defeated, had He avoided Jerusalem. Although different in temper and remote, Jerusalem influenced Galilee by its teachers, and overawed it both by the venerableness of its institutions and by the greatness of its claims. A spiritual victory at Jerusalem was indispensable to the complete spiritual conquest of the Galilæan disciples. Had not our Lord challenged the scribes and Pharisees, the priests and elders, He could never have held undisputed sway even over His most devoted followers, especially when they must have known that He shrank from the supreme test alike of Himself and His doctrines.

For, lastly, let it be borne in mind that our Lord could only have avoided Jerusalem by deliberately *selecting* Galilee as the sphere of His ministry. Without laying too much stress upon the fact that He, as "made under the law," observed the Jewish festivals, it is clear that Christ's ministry had never been confined to Galilee. St. John speaks much of our Lord's ministry at Jerusalem, and, despite all that has been said to the contrary, the

Synoptists imply it. Not only do they tell of a visit to Judæa (Matt. xix. 1, Mark x. 1), but our Lord's words in His lamentation over Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children together!" (Matt. xxiii. 37, Luke xiii. 34) are a distinct corroboration of St. John. Had our Lord therefore decided to remain in Galilee, it would have been a withdrawal, a surrender, and one made against the interests of His work for the sake of personal safety. This being so, such a course was impossible. And if duty called Him to go up, nothing could be gained by delay, for the storm-clouds which threatened would not pass away. What, then, so natural as to go up when obedience to the law demanded that He should celebrate the Paschal Feast, and when the presence of many Galilæans in the Holy City so tended rather to diminish than to increase the risk that no wanton exposure to danger can be alleged?

2. But how about our Lord's behaviour when He reached Jerusalem? Can that be equally approved? Charges have been made against Him, notably by Mr. Francis W. Newman,[1] that His entry into Jerusalem was ostentatious, that His clearing of the temple was violent, and that by His indictment of the scribes and Pharisees He "knowingly and purposely exasperated the rulers into a great crime—the crime of taking His life from personal resentment." Whatever force there may be in these objections arises largely from their begging the question at issue. Our Lord's consciousness of Messiahship, if it were real, demanded expression, laid upon Him the responsibility of claiming the allegiance and enforcing the

[1] *Phases of Faith*, pp. 159 *et seq.*

authority which belonged to Him in virtue of His divine office. The only subject for inquiry will then be whether His claim was excessive, and His manner of making it wise. Dealing first with the entry into Jerusalem, it may be affirmed, in opposition to Mr. Newman, that the entry into Jerusalem is remarkable for making the necessary claim to Messiahship *without* ostentation. The act of riding upon an ass was simple and natural enough. In the case of an ordinary man it would have passed unnoticed. And our Lord did not proclaim to the world its significance. He left it to be inferred. It was because the inference was drawn that the multitudes turned His entry into a triumphal procession. But, notwithstanding the prophecy of Zechariah, it was not the mere riding upon an ass which made the conclusion they drew so irresistible, but the whole force of our Lord's character and ministry which lay behind His action. And this being so, our Lord's action became a last and most solemn appeal to the people and their ecclesiastical rulers. Their fundamental mistake lay in this, that they had emptied the Messianic ideal of its ethical contents—had forgotten of what spirit the Christ should be. The unworldliness of Jesus—His meekness and lowliness—was a stumbling-block to them, a reason for despising and rejecting Him, despite the impression which His ministry had produced. By His fulfilment of the prediction of Zechariah our Lord silently recalled to their memory what they had forgotten; He summoned prophecy to support the impression which His character and teaching should have made, and, laying anew the proper stress on the elements which they had ignored, endeavoured to bring back to the

Messianic picture its ancient, spiritual glory. And He did this, not controversially, but by a dramatic action, which, instead of imposing the truth upon them, should have influenced them to rediscover it for themselves. Had His action had this effect, convictions would have been awakened in them which would have brought them by a true religious revival to co-operate with Him in the work of ecclesiastical reformation. That no such result was attained must be laid to their charge, and not to His.

The question raised about the purification of the temple must be taken generally, together with that concerning the indictment of the scribes and Pharisees. The considerations which justify the latter stand good, on the whole, as to the former. There are, however, two distinct features. The first is that our Lord, by the purification, attacked the people as under the same condemnation as the priests. They also had lost their sense of the awfulness of divine service. It had become a piece of ordinary business with them, and they chaffered about the price of offerings as men do at a fair. So far as the corporate interests of the temple were concerned, the spirit of worship had been poisoned at the fount, and the contamination spread every time the multitudes drew near to the holy place, or prepared to offer what should have been a holy sacrifice. Men of such a spirit can hardly be awakened to a sense of their own impropriety by gentler means. Their conscience, and that of those who are demoralised by them, can be aroused only by the sharp shock of prophetic anger. And our Lord's anger was expressed not in word, but in deed. This is its next peculiarity. The action must be judged not by the small considerations of

the modern police-court,[1] but by the spiritual authority of our Lord, by the manners of the times, and, above all, by the greatness of the occasion. If these be ignored, our Lord's action will be condemned, as it is by Mr. Newman; but when due account is taken of them, our Lord will stand justified as the vindicator of a sanctity which the custodians of the temple had not reverence enough to appreciate, much less to protect.

The most serious charge, however, is that of purposely exasperating the rulers into the crime of taking His life by the attack which our Lord made on them. Dr. Martineau's reply to this is as follows: "The prophetic spirit is sometimes oblivious of the rules of the drawing-room; and inspired conscience, like the inspiring God, seeing a hypocrite, will take the liberty to say so, and act accordingly. Are the superficial amenities, the soothing fictions, the smotherings of the burning heart . . . really paramount in this world, and never to give way? And when a soul of power, unable to refrain, rubs off, though it be with rasping words, all the varnish from rottenness and lies, is he to be tried in our courts of compliment for a misdemeanour? Is there never a higher duty than that of either pitying or converting guilty men,—the duty of publicly exposing them? of awakening the popular conscience, and sweeping away the conventional timidities, for a severe return to truth and reality? No rule of morals can be recognised as just which prohibits conformity of human speech to fact, and insists on terms of civility being kept with all manner of iniquity." To this Mr. Newman makes the rejoinder, that "when truth

[1] Mr. Newman terms it "a breach of the peace."

will only exasperate, and cannot do good, silence is imperative. A man who reproaches an armed tyrant in words too plain does but excite him to murder; and the shocking thing is, that seems to have been the express object of Jesus. No good result could be reasonably expected." And he adds, that "it needs no divine prophet to inflame a multitude against the avarice, hypocrisy, and oppression of rulers, nor any deep inspiration of conscience in the multitude to be wide awake on that point themselves." Distasteful as it must be to discuss a charge which shocks our reverence, the subject is so important and has been suggested to so many, that it is necessary to deal with it in order to make a sure foundation for our further inquiry.

We may probably approach the subject from a starting-point of almost universal agreement. Speaking generally, burning wrath, wrath which finds expression in adequate denunciation, is the appropriate temper towards hypocrisy, shallow and sordid irreverence, ecclesiastical tyranny, and gross betrayal of a solemn, divine trust. Not only to be without such wrath, but even to refrain from giving utterance to it, reveals a fault of character of the greatest gravity, and is a dereliction of the duty actively to oppose the evil that comes within the range of our influence, and affects the society of which we are a part. Such utterance is as necessary for the well-being of society and for the salvation of the offenders themselves, as it is for the integrity of our own moral character. Only two factors can modify this general duty. If the wrong to be denounced is a minor evil, and our warfare against the greater and predominating would be imperilled by at once

dealing with this lesser and subordinate wrong, or if by at present administering a deserved rebuke for some fault of conduct we should hinder the progress of a spiritual education, which will in time make such faults impossible, then the wider interests of the truth must overrule the narrower, and turn, for the time, the general duty of speech into a particular duty of silence. But the exact opposite was the case when our Lord entered Jerusalem. He had to deal with no tributary evil, but with a gigantic and soul-destroying system of unholiness and unrighteousness, out of which all manner of corruptions inevitably sprang. So central and determinative was it, that no beginning of a spiritual quickening could take place without such awakening of the conscience and loosing of the bonds of demoralising authority, as only denunciation could bring about.

And, in addition, this system was no passing phenomenon of only temporary importance. Just as our Lord, being the perfect revelation of ideal humanity, stands in organic relation to all true humanity and expresses it, so in the Pharisaism which confronted Him,—there gather to a head and are represented all the forces which are in most deadly hostility to true religion in every age. The question at issue was more than the momentary relation of Jesus to a false and destructive system. Both the one and the other were representative. The true life of mankind needed to receive its complete expression in Jesus, and, shorn of holy indignation against its most dangerous foe, how could that expression be complete? And in the denunciation of Pharisaism, battle was joined not merely with its local representatives, but with all

those tendencies working in all times and places which are fundamentally identical with it.

To conclude. The necessity to our Lord of expressing the true life, and of stirring by His prophetic voice that which is best in men to resist its most insidious and persistent foe, surpassed in importance the practical considerations of the hour; but even as to these it was a priceless service that our Lord rendered by His exposure and defiance of a system and spirit which, unless defied, must have prevented the growth of the worship of the Father "in spirit and in truth." Against this all that can be set is our Lord's personal safety, and the provocation to anger of the men whom He denounced, thereby increasing their guilt. The former is the lowest motive, and, though in its order respectable, becomes mean when adhered to in presence of a supreme call. The latter introduces the novel principle of charging against the good, that their righteous hatred of wrong-doing often occasions the intensifying of the wickedness of the bad.

Of course, humanly speaking, our Lord by His fidelity gave Himself over to death. Only a miracle could have saved Him, and it was contrary to the law of the Incarnation that such a miracle should be wrought. Our Lord "witnessed before Pontius Pilate the good confession," and took His place in history as the King of martyrs. But if it is true that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church," if their heroic self-sacrifice has, from age to age, been the mightiest weapon against evil and the noblest inspiration of the good, this is so in a unique sense of our Lord, whose followers and imitators the martyrs have been.

The conclusion which the gospels force upon us is, that the historical cause of our Lord's death was simply His unwavering obedience to the Father in the faithful manifestation of the life of His Son; that His death was the inevitable sequel, as it was the most glorious consummation, of the life which could be summed up in the words, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

CHAPTER III

THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT

In presence of widely divergent doctrines of the Atonement, which have all claimed the warrant of Holy Scripture, and of the growingly frequent statement that no revelation of its grounds and nature has been given, it is necessary to make a careful examination of the biblical teaching upon the subject.

In entering upon this investigation we need not devote any great labour to establish the fact that the Scriptures set forth our Lord's death as the objective cause of the forgiveness of sins. The exhaustive treatment of Dr. Dale has sufficiently demonstrated this. The main question for us belongs to the next stage of the inquiry. Granted that the necessity for an objective Atonement exists, does the Bible throw any light upon its nature? What is the demand made by God which is satisfied by the atoning death of Christ? And by reason of what does His death meet that requirement? Is the biblical doctrine explicit and consistent on these points? If these questions are to receive a satisfactory answer, it will be necessary to do more than single out isolated texts. The teaching of the sacred books must be exhibited as a whole, in order that we may reach their essential spirit, setting particular statements in their proper relations to

the main drift of each writer, and also to make clear that no passages have been left out of sight which would modify or invalidate our conclusions.

It will be well to begin with the New Testament, partly because here alone is contained the specifically Christian teaching upon the subject, partly because preparatory stages of revelation can be best understood in the light of the final development with which they are organically connected, and also because the doctrine, and especially the rites, of the Old Testament can safely be applied to our Lord only so far as He and His apostles deliberately or by implication adopt them. And of the New Testament it will be well to take first the apostolic writings, because they were written in the light of the completed work of Christ, and under the influence of fully realised reconciliation with God. True, they must be tested and illustrated by the teaching of our Lord. No conclusion which they draw about the significance of His death could stand if it clashed with the spirit in which He regarded it. But while His consciousness is thus the touchstone of their doctrine, for the purpose of exposition it seems more satisfactory to start with them than with Him, because He is the revelation which it is their business, as guided by His Spirit, to construe.

I. The Apostolic Writings

The apostolic writings to be studied are the epistles of St. Paul, 1 Peter, 1 John, the Apocalypse, and the Epistle to the Hebrews. The others contain nothing of importance for our purpose.

1. The epistles of St. Paul must be dealt with in the order of the four great groups into which they fall.

In the *Epistles to the Thessalonians* there is only one reference to the Atonement. The apostle is too much occupied with the approaching advent, and the ethical spirit incumbent on those who expect it, to treat of the whole range of Christian doctrine. But one reference there is (1 Thess. v. 9, 10): "For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." It is significant that in this short passage several distinct statements are made containing the characteristic notes of St. Paul's later doctrine.

First, the salvation to which we are appointed through our Lord Jesus Christ is contrasted with an appointment unto wrath, and it is implied that our appointment to salvation instead of to wrath is due to our Lord's death.

In the next place, our Lord's experience of death for us results in our experience of life with Him. This is the first statement of the apostle's characteristic teaching; namely, that our Lord enters into, and even identifies Himself with, our evil, in order that He may admit us to, and even identify us with Himself in, His own good. How important a place this solidarity between the Redeemer and the redeemed occupies in St. Paul's theology is well shown by Dr. A. B. Bruce in his book on *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*. See pp. 62, 66, etc.

Lastly, stress is laid on our continued fellowship with our Lord in the enjoyment of this good. We are to "live together with Him."

Coming to the second and main group of St. Paul's epistles (1 *and* 2 *Corinthians, Galatians, Romans*), we find in the *First Epistle to the Corinthians* little definite teaching on our subject, but, on the other hand, the most emphatic declaration (chaps. i. 17, ii. 2) that the apostle had made the preaching of "Christ crucified" the sole object of his concern at Corinth, and that he regarded it as the paramount duty of his apostleship. The scantiness of his teaching in this epistle is accounted for by the pressure upon him of the practical difficulties affecting the moral life of the Church, with which he had to deal, and also on the ground that the fulness of his oral teaching made further instruction unnecessary. But while not going into details, the apostle gives the most impressive testimony to his discovery in "Christ crucified" of the divine reality corresponding to and surpassing both the wisdom sought after by the Greek and the sign sought after by the Jew. Christ is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (i. 23, 24). Three other references in the epistle are of importance. We are told, "For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ" (v. 7); a passage which must be examined when we come to consider the application of the Old Testament sacrifices to our Lord by the New Testament writers. Later on, we find St. Paul's account of the institution of the Lord's supper (xi. 23–27) in almost the words of the gospels. And, finally, in summarising the substance of his preaching (xv. 3) the apostle says, "I delivered unto you that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." The expression, "concerning our sins," is peculiar to this passage. The

words, considered by themselves, hardly carry their own precise interpretation. Yet, even as they stand, it seems more natural to understand the word "concerning" as teaching that our sins laid upon our Lord an objective necessity of dying, rather than a necessity of dying in order to overcome them.

In the *Second Epistle to the Corinthians* there is one passage of importance for our subject; namely, chapter v. 14–21. It is introduced as St. Paul's apology for the spirit in which he exercises his apostleship. He and those who have part in the apostolic ministry are under the constraint of the love of Christ. "We thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died"; and that "He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again." This purpose of the death of Christ fixes a new spiritual standard of life for mankind, so that henceforth the apostle knows no man, not even Christ, after the old life of the flesh. To be in Christ is to be a new creature. And this marvellous transformation is of God, "who reconciled us to Himself through Christ," and gave that "ministry of reconciliation," in fulfilment of which the apostle beseeches "on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God."

In the course of this statement the apostle makes four declarations of the greatest importance.

1. Christ died on behalf of all. The service He rendered to all was that He died for them. It is this which is the measure of the love of Christ to men, this in which is expressed the benefit He brought to them. All other benefits received from Him pass out of sight in

presence of the overwhelming importance of the fact that Christ died on behalf of all.

2. The death of Christ is the death of all. "One died for all, therefore all died." Dr. Denney paraphrases this as follows: "His death was as good as theirs. That is *why* His death is an advantage to them; that is what rationally connects it with their benefit: it is a death which is really theirs, it is *their* death which has been died by *Him.*"[1] But this surely is to weaken and distort the meaning of the text. Christ's death is the death of all, and not merely as good as that of all; and His death is died by them, according to the apostle, rather than theirs by Him. The saying can only be understood in connexion with the apostle's declaration elsewhere, that he has been "crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20), which, with kindred passages, must be examined when we come to consider the relationship of believers to the atoning sacrifice of our Lord. But this saying affords an objective basis for that subjective experience. The death of Christ was in a real sense the actual death of all; and hence the foundation is laid for a living spiritual union with it on the part of those who through faith enter into its meaning. The apostle does not say that He died a death which otherwise would have been died by all, but that He died a death which contains in itself the death of all.

3. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses." This is the explanation of the object attained by the death of Christ. The second clause explains how the reconciliation spoken of in the first is effected. Mankind are brought

[1] *Studies in Theology*, p. 110.

into the new relation of favour with God, which is indicated by the word reconciliation, because God ceases to impute their trespasses unto them. In what relation, however, does the death of Christ stand to this non-imputation of trespasses? Are we to understand that it is the cause or the effect of this non-imputation? Did God give Christ to die, in order to win the world to reconciliation with Himself, because He had already ceased to impute their trespasses to them? or was it on the ground of the death of Christ that He ceased to impute their trespasses to the world? The latter would appear to be the case, not only because it is more in keeping with the general tenor of the apostle's thought elsewhere, but because our Lord's death has already been represented as being a death on our behalf, for our benefit, and, further, because St. Paul lays down that Christ's being made sin for us is the condition of our becoming the "righteousness of God in Him"—this last being the equivalent of the non-imputation of trespasses. It would appear, therefore, that this act of God is conditioned by the death of Christ. Of these alternative interpretations, the latter therefore must be preferred.

But possibly even this fails to do complete justice to the apostle's thought. Does the non-imputation of trespasses take place after the death of Christ, being brought about by it? or is the state of the divine mind which leads to the non-imputation, although grounded upon the death of Christ, antecedent to it, and the effective cause which brought that death about? That is to say, the death of Christ being the objective ground of the non-imputation of trespasses, does the apostle intend

to treat the death of Christ as bringing about the determination not to impute them? or does he intend that the determination not to impute trespasses brought about the death of Christ in order to make such an act of clemency possible? It would seem that the latter is the case, that the apostle is describing an atoning act in the mind of God which needs the death of Christ to justify it, and therefore brings that death to pass.

4. The last great declaration of this passage is, that God made "Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." It is clear that these two expressions balance and interpret one another. This correspondence alone is sufficient to show that the term sin is not to be rendered here sin-offering, as has sometimes been done. The apostle is declaring, as elsewhere, a double identification. We are identified with God's righteousness; Christ is identified with our sin. There is a double exchange of status: from that of sinlessness to that of sin, in the case of Christ; from that of guilt to that of righteousness, in the case of sinners. But the expression is too strong to be satisfied by being interpreted merely of status. Dr. Denney says that "it means precisely . . . that Christ died for us; died that death of ours which is the wages of sin."[1] But the expression seems to go further back than this. It speaks of something that Christ became *in order that* He might die for us, something that His death was evidence of His having become. Our representative by nature, in His humiliation Christ becomes one with our sin; and it is in that mysterious oneness with our sin that He dies to

[1] *Studies in Theology*, p. 112.

effect our salvation. Our salvation consists in our being made one with the righteousness of God. Our faith takes upon us His righteousness and makes it our own, and we enter into the blessedness which is attached to it. On the other hand, Christ enters into our sin, takes it upon Himself, is wrapt in it. He stands for us and with us, as though a sinner, and in that capacity He dies on our behalf. The status of our Lord in offering the atoning sacrifice is that of one "made sin."

In one other passage of this epistle (chap. viii. 9) the apostle again uses this language of identification. "Ye know," he says, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich." Men enter into His riches because He has entered into their poverty. This assumption of poverty is an act of self-humiliation on our behalf, for "He was rich." The earthly life of Christ is the manifestation of a prior self-sacrifice.

The *Epistle to the Galatians* again bases our Lord's redemptive work upon His complete identification with us. We are told that "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law" (chap. iv. 4, 5); where His coming under precisely the conditions of those to be redeemed is set forth as essential to their redemption. This is asserted still more strongly in chapter iii. 13, which states that "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." This text presents to us most difficult problems, demanding careful investigation. The apostle, in his argument that salvation comes not from "works of the law," but from the "hearing of faith," passes

from his appeal to the experience of his readers to the determining case of Abraham. The Scripture declares that "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (Gen. xv. 6). Moreover, the promise was made to Abraham that in him "all the nations should be blessed" (Gen. xii. 3), which the apostle interprets as teaching that a common principle of faith and a common experience of blessedness bind together Abraham and his spiritual descendants (Gal. iii. 9). But if this be so, it is clear that justification does not come by the works of the law, for the law is not of faith, but of works (Gal. iii. 12); and, moreover, it lays down that "cursed is every one which continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them" (Gal. iii. 10, Deut. xxvii. 26). As no one has thus fulfilled the law, this failure shuts up all those who are under it to its curse; and the apostle is therefore bound to show how such are relieved from this situation. He does so by the declaration that "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us"; and he proves this statement by reference to the death which Christ died, "For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Deut. xxi. 23).

The first question that is raised here is, Who are included in the word "us"? Is the reference limited to Jews? or does it include Gentiles? The saying farther on that Christ was "born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law," leads naturally to the answer that St. Paul means Jews only. But this is not completely to settle the matter, for in chapter iv. 21 he addresses his Galatian opponents as "ye that desire to be under the law," as though there were a possibility of

their putting themselves under it, and thereby being exposed to its tests, and to the evil consequences which must follow upon their inevitable inability to satisfy them. Thus while the apostle's statement, taken in the light of his other great sayings, seems to show that he had Jews in his mind, yet we are not entitled to dismiss Gentiles as having necessarily no interest in the law, and in the dealing of Christ with the law.

The next question that is raised is, What is the relation of the law, as it curses, to God? Dr. Fairbairn draws an important distinction between the term law, as used by the apostle in its Jewish acceptation, and the sense in which theologians generally use it; that, namely, of the Roman jurisprudence. He says: "Hence, if a man reads the Pauline *νόμος* as if it were Roman and magisterial *lex*, he will radically misread it, especially in all that concerns its relation to the death of Christ. 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law'; certainly, but this was the law which the Jew loved, and which was thus for ever abolished, not the universal law of God. He became 'a curse for us'; certainly, but under the same law, for by it 'He was hanged upon a tree.' But the law that thus judged Him condemned itself; by cursing Him it became accursed. His death was not the vindication, but the condemnation of the law. And this is the characteristic attitude of the New Testament writers. The law which Christ at once fulfilled and abolished was not the law of the judge and jurist, but the law of the rabbi and the priest, the law of ceremonial and service, of works and worship, of prophecy and type. The language which describes His relation to it, and its to Him, cannot

be used to describe His relation to the absolute law or righteousness of God. This relation we must interpret through our idea of God, not through our very mixed notions of law and justice." [1]

Surely this is not the natural impression produced by the apostle's argument. The distinction drawn between Jewish and Roman law is real, but there are points of contact between them which are not merely "incidental"; for while different in spirit, and covering wider ground, the Jewish *torah* did fulfil the legal functions of the Roman *lex*. And St. Paul cannot lightly entertain the Jewish law. He is obliged to find for it in the work of salvation a divine function (Gal. iii. 19) which is tutorial in its nature (Gal. iii. 24); and the seriousness of his dealing with the situation created by the curse of the law upon disobedience, and the grandeur of the means by which according to our text that situation is dealt with, show that for him the gravity of the utterance of the law lies in the fact that it declares the mind of God, and that it loses its power, not because Christ's death has condemned it, but because Christ's death has satisfied it. There is not the faintest trace that the apostle has any feeling that the way in which the law as such dealt with Christ brought dishonour upon it; but everything to show that by this dealing a weight had been removed from his own heart which had been all the heavier because the law had spoken to him and still continued to speak with divine authority, although its message was neither the only one nor the highest one which God had to send. Thus the text is not a mere *argumentum ad hominem*, but an exposition of the

[1] *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 481.

ground of confidence upon which the apostle reposed, as face to face with the law, and, above all, with the authority whom the law served—namely, God.

That this is the correct interpretation seems borne out by the great passage, Romans ii. 10–16, in which St. Paul deals with the relations of the Gentile world to the law. There he treats the moral principle, which righteous Gentiles obey, as being "the work of the law written in their hearts"; so that the law (here clearly the Jewish law) is treated as the outward and institutional promulgation of the principles of all righteousness, and these latter are rather attributed to the work of the law, as if it were supreme, than the law attributed to them as though it were a casual and external product of them. Thus, for the apostle, the solemnity of the dealing with the Jewish law involved in the death of Christ lay in this, that though its form was Jewish, even governed by the text, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," yet that Jewish form was the special and peculiar expression of universal principles, and represented a demand and a satisfaction so divine that they are the revelation of the means by which the righteousness of God wrought for the salvation not only of the Jew, but of the world. In this way the more Jewish expression of the truth in our text prepares the way for the more universal expression of it in Romans ii. 15. The conclusion therefore is, that the redemption spoken of must be treated as concerned with God manifesting Himself through the law, and as affecting mankind, although the primary reference of the word "us" may be to the Jews.

What then, finally, is meant by Christ's becoming a

curse? The offender against the law is banned by the law's displeasure, and exposed to its penalties. The man who "hangeth upon a tree" is thereby marked as being under that ban. His death is apparently not so much the penalty of the law,—for it is not necessarily implied that the man is hanged upon the tree by order of the law,—as a sign that he is an outcast from the favour of the law, and on account thereof exposed to all the evils which follow its displeasure. Therefore, just as Christ was "made sin" for us, so He was "made a curse" for us—stood with the accursed violators of the law under those conditions of its displeasure to which they were exposed. He made Himself absolutely one with them and their outcast position, and, by absorbing into Himself all its meaning, delivered them out of it. His being made a curse is His entering into the whole of those evil consequences which are the mark of the displeasure of the law.

But His endurance of these was not merely passive, for we are told (Gal. i. 4) that He "gave Himself for our sins"; and this self-devotion out of boundless sympathy with us becomes the standard of all Christian life, for the command is given, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. vi. 2). On the other hand, if Christ has identified Himself with our curse, the believer so entirely identifies himself with Christ's death, as the typical experience of the apostle shows, that he is "crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20). As this passage must be studied with the kindred one (2 Cor. v.) when we consider the relation of the believer to the atoning sacrifice, it is only necessary now to note it. The one remaining passage

connected with our subject in this epistle is Galatians vi. 14, where the apostle speaks of the moral dynamic of the cross: "Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

But it is naturally in the *Epistle to the Romans* that we find the completest statement of the apostle's doctrine of the Atonement. The whole rests, as in the epistles already considered, upon the complete identification of our Lord with mankind. As in 1 Corinthians xv., so in Romans v. 12–21, Christ is the second man, whose relation to the race is as natural, as universal as, but more intimate and influential than, that of Adam. In Romans, however, there is an advance upon the teaching of First Corinthians, occasioned by the difference of the subject discussed. In the latter the apostle is arguing as to the resurrection, and its relation to the conquest of death considered as a physical experience, "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 22). "The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit" (ver. 45). According to the divine order of things, the psychical comes before the spiritual; hence, "the first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven." Had we only this passage before us, we might suppose that the whole was a matter of natural and normal evolution, with no such disturbing factor as sin involved. But in Romans the death which comes to us through the first man is shown to be the consequence of his sin; and therefore antecedent to, and as the condition of, the gift of life through the second man, comes the gift of righteousness.

Justification comes first, and justification is "justification of life" (v. 18). Hence, in the Epistle to the Romans, our Lord's identification with us is treated as wholly remedial,—has the destruction of sin in view. We are told that "God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and *concerning sin*, condemned sin in the flesh" (viii. 3). There has been much discussion as to the meaning of the phrase, "in the likeness of the flesh of sin."[1] It is evident that, in the apostle's view, there is a very close connexion between sin and the flesh, and between the flesh and Christ. It is impossible here to discuss the relation of the flesh to sin, and it is extremely difficult to arrive at any confident conclusion. It is clear that St. Paul's judgment of the flesh is extremely unfavourable, and, at the same time, that his impulse completely to identify our Lord with it is extremely strong. The stress must assuredly be laid rather upon His assimilation to, than upon His differentiation from, the flesh. But the apostle's reverence checks him from complete identification. He does not say that our Lord came in sinful flesh, but in "the likeness" of it. His assimilation was as complete as His sinlessness would permit, and gave Him so truly human a life that, by His "fulfilment of all righteousness" in the face of temptation, "He condemned sin in the flesh." This is the practical point of the apostle. But the essential conditions are not scientifically defined.

We come now to the great passages of the epistle which deal directly with our subject. The first of these

[1] For a full treatment, see Dr. A. B. Bruce's *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*, pp. 279–290.

is Romans iii. 21–31. The destruction of sin and the gift of life depend, we are taught, upon the prior bestowment on sinners of the righteousness of God; and therefore the apostle, having previously demonstrated that the whole world is guilty before God, and that there is no way of justification by the works of the law, proceeds to declare the "righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe" (iii. 22), and to set forth the reasons on which it rests. The ground of our justification is the "redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (iii. 24). That redemption is then more particularly explained. God "set forth Christ to be a propitiation" (iii. 25); the propitiation is "through faith," that is, becomes subjectively efficacious by means of faith; it is "by His blood," has its objective realisation in the shedding of the blood of Christ; the end to be attained by the setting forth of the propitiation was "the showing of His (*i.e.* God's) righteousness"; that which made such a display necessary was "the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God"; and on the basis of that display "at this present season," there rests the twofold truth that God is at once "just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus." Such is the general statement of the passage; but there are several points of great importance which call for closer examination.

First, what is meant by the word ἱλαστήριον, translated "propitiation"? We may dismiss without discussion the rendering "mercy-seat," as being inconsistent with the meaning of the passage as a whole.[1] Whether the word be translated "a propitiatory sacrifice," or "a means of

[1] See Meyer, *Commentary*, in loc.

propitiation," its general significance, taken by itself, seems clear. It is that by means of which those who are out of favour may be restored to favour, and therefore to normal relations, with him to whom it is presented, in consequence of the changed condition of mind it brings about, not in those who present it, but in him to whom it is presented. Those who offer a propitiation thereby express their desire to be at one with him to whom they offer it, and by means of it seek to turn his aversion from them and his wrath towards them into favour. Such is the general meaning of the word as it stands, and of the act and its consequences which it represents; and although in the case of the Atonement by the death of Christ there are many elements which complicate this simple meaning, yet its general significance cannot be lost. The death of Christ is the means of bringing sinful men into new relations with God, as the result, not merely of a change in themselves, but of the divine favour of which it is the justification. And if this be clear from the word itself, the context affords the strongest confirmation. The passage is the resumption of the great theme upon which St. Paul entered in chapter i. 16, 17; namely, that the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation," on account of the "righteousness of God from faith to faith" which is therein revealed. The revelation of righteousness at once raised the thought of the terrible and equally real revelation of the wrath of God (i. 18), of the heinousness and the universality of the sin which has called it forth. The conclusion from this is, that "all the world" is "under the judgment of God" (iii. 19). Hence, in order to salvation, the first requisite is the removal of this judgment, the

turning away of the wrath of God, from which the judgment of condemnation proceeds. And this can only be brought about by a propitiation.

But we must proceed to look more closely at the objects which make this propitiation necessary. It is "set forth" in order to show "the righteousness of God." It is obvious that here this phrase must be understood in a narrower sense than that of chapter i. 17 and chapter iii. 22. The "passing over" of sin in "forbearance" is not the same thing as justifying "him that hath faith in Jesus." There was in the former no active establishment of righteousness, but simply an apparent neglect to mark sin by inflicting its penal consequences, due to a forbearance which might be construed as indifference. The counteracting of this impression was the reason for the "*setting forth*" of the propitiation. It showed the "righteousness of God," that inner ethical principle and purpose of God which make it impossible for Him to treat lightly unrighteousness in His creatures. But if the "setting forth" of the propitiation was necessary to show this righteousness, the propitiation was necessary for its maintenance. God was to be at once "just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus." The *manifestation* of righteousness is secured by *the manifestation* of the propitiation; the *maintenance* of righteousness, unimpaired by forbearance or forgiveness, is secured by the *provision* of the propitiation.

But, again, we must give due weight to the statement that "*God* set forth" the propitiation. Great care is taken throughout to show how entirely the whole transaction differs from those which were familiarly known in the

service of the heathen gods. The word propitiation is used, and with its essential meaning unaltered. But here we have no buying off or appeasing an anger caused by selfish or, at least, personal considerations. The motives which necessitate the propitiation,—the maintenance and declaration of righteousness,—belong to an immeasurably higher plane. And to complete the contrast, we are told that Christ Jesus was "set forth" *by God* as a propitiation. The ends of righteousness cannot be set aside, but they are satisfied by God Himself. Thus a reconciling purpose, proceeding out of the divine love, underlies, as it were, the wrath of God, and provides the means of turning it away by fulfilling those ends of righteousness, the violation of which stirs the wrath of God. Hence even His wrath is an expression and a minister of His love. The fact that the atoning sacrifice is provided by God, not only prevents us from conceiving of His wrath as a selfish emotion, but shows that love works in the wrath as well as in the provision which turns it away.

Lastly, the propitiation is accomplished "by the blood" of Christ—by His death in itself, understood as including all that is involved in a propitiatory sacrifice.

The next great passage, Romans v. 6–21, opens with the reiterated assertion that "Christ died for us," again showing that the endurance in itself of death by our Lord has for St. Paul the greatest importance. In His death "God commendeth His own love toward us," and the more powerfully, because it was "while we were yet sinners' that "Christ died for us." It is "by His blood" that we are justified (v. 9); and that being so, we shall, still more be saved through Him from future wrath. Our continuous

relation to Christ secures us against the wrath of God; in which assurance there is another indication that the work of Atonement is Godward, and has to do with the turning away His wrath. This reference to the wrath of God seems to require us to understand the following verse (10), which speaks of how, "while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son," of a change wrought by God in our relationships with Him, through the death of Christ, as prior to the change of heart brought about in man.

But the remainder of the chapter brings out the spiritual principle which is manifested in the death of Christ. The apostle, having set in contrast the one man Adam, through whom sin and death have come upon the race, with the one, Jesus Christ, through whom righteousness and life have come upon us, says, "So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous" (v. 18, 19).

A double correspondence is here set forth. In the former verse, "the one trespass" of man, with its consequent "condemnation," is contrasted with the "one act of righteousness," which secures to all men "justification of life." Here the act of man entailing general condemnation stands over against the one act of God, whose righteousness issues a sentence of general justification. But the second verse (v. 19) sets in similar contrast the disobedience of the one man, Adam, and the obedience of the one, Christ.

Here disobedience is counteracted by obedience, and we are entitled to find in this obedience the element which for St. Paul constitutes the merit of the Atonement. The justifying act of God, on the one hand, and the atoning obedience of Christ on the other, result in a gift of righteousness to the whole race, which is appropriated by the faith of individual believers. Meyer says, in his commentary on this passage, that "this designation is *selected* as the antithesis to" the disobedience of Adam, and must be understood as meaning not "the collective life-obedience," but "the deed of Atonement willed by God." But the designation could only have been selected because it expressed the vital matter. This passage has been used as the foundation of a distinction between the active and the passive righteousness of Christ: the latter being the bearing of the penalty of our sins, by which our acquittal is obtained; the former being the ground upon which a positive righteousness is imputed to us, and conferred upon us. The general merits of this doctrine must be considered later on.[1] For the moment, it suffices to say that this passage gives no hint of such a distinction. The apostle's statement is clearly intended to cover the whole ground, and to represent in its entirety the meritorious cause by which sinners are constituted righteous. There was a necessity that death should be endured; but, for the apostle, the fact that the spirit in which it was endured by Christ was the opposite of that which entered into the world by sin, is vital to the efficacy of the Atonement. And this statement as to the spiritual principle of the Atonement is strengthened by chapter xv. 3, where the

[1] See chapter iv.

whole spirit of our Lord's life and death is expressed in the words, "For Christ also pleased not Himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell upon Me." This unselfish devotion of Christ lay in His whole-hearted obedience to God, and in the unflinching endurance, in pursuit of that obedience, of "reproaches" which were in very deed aimed at God.

Two other texts in this epistle may be mentioned, but they call for no additional comment after what has already been said. In Romans viii. 32, the gift of Christ is described as a manifestation of God's love, so great as to carry with it the assurance of all other gifts: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" The other is Romans iv. 25: "Who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification."

The third group of the Epistles—those of the imprisonment—introduce no new feature, but confirm the teaching of the main group.

In the *Epistle to the Philippians* there is the great passage (chap. ii. 5–11) on the humiliation of our Lord. His earthly life "in the likeness of men" is the result of the prior "self-emptying" of one who had existed "in the form of God." The spirit of His earthly life corresponds to the act by which He entered upon it. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself." All that this humiliation involved is expressed in three clauses, which form a climax. "Becoming obedient even unto death —yea, the death of the cross." The experience of death was the goal of His obedience; the submission to death, the consummation of this obedience. And the form of

that death,—the death of the cross,—was not only the cause of unspeakable shame, but, as we know from the Epistle to the Galatians, was the mark of that curse which the law pronounced on the disobedient. "Wherefore"—on the ground of His self-humiliation, expressed in obedience which reached even to submission to death, and death under such conditions—"God highly exalted Him." The action of God exactly reverses that of Christ Jesus. His exaltation by God is due to His self-humiliation, as seen in His matchless obedience. Hence it is the self-humiliation and obedience which constitute the spiritual preciousness, and therefore the atoning worth of our Lord's passion. Elsewhere (Rom. iv. 25) we are taught to connect our Lord's death with our offences, and His resurrection with our justification. It seems therefore an obvious inference, that the cause of our Saviour's exaltation is the cause also of the justification which rests upon, and is proclaimed by, that exaltation. The worth of the Atonement does not lie outside the merit, which is rewarded. That merit is here said to consist in the self-humiliation which crowned its obedience in submission to the death of the cross. Hence the inference is, that the worth of the Atonement depends upon the spirit in which our Lord underwent death. And this passage is a confirmation of Romans v. 19, "Through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous."

The *Epistle to the Colossians* deals chiefly with the subjective redemption brought about by the cross, and gives it a wider than merely human significance. "All things" are to be reconciled to God (i. 20). But our redemption, according to both Colossians i. 14 and

Ephesians i. 7, is said to consist in the "forgiveness of sins"; and as this forgiveness comes from God, so the subjective effect of the Atonement upon us by means of forgiveness depends upon its objective value for God as the ground of His forgiveness. Everywhere St. Paul treats righteousness as the condition of spiritual life, and hence, even if the term ἄφεσις in these two passages could be understood as meaning release from the moral bondage of sin, rather than as forgiveness, yet, in conformity with the apostle's thought, that release must rest upon the justifying act of God. This being so, it is not the sense or the declaration of forgiveness that is said to come through the blood of Christ, but the forgiveness itself. And as that forgiveness is the act of God, the redemption spoken of is the means of bringing about that act.

The passage, "Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and He hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross" (ii. 14), is at once an echo of the characteristic teaching of the Epistle to the Galatians and gives a point of contact with the Epistle to the Hebrews, suggesting both comparison and contrast. St. Paul dwells upon the destruction of the old by the new, the writer of Hebrews upon the realisation of the old in the new; the result being the same for both.

One new point of the highest importance is raised in the Epistle to the Colossians. We are told (i. 16, 17), that "all things have been created through the Son, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist." Here the headship of 1 Corinthians and Romans is extended to the whole creation,—rests upon

an eternal relationship of the Son to the world, which is manifested in His being the Creator, the constitutive life, and the ideal end of the whole. We shall see, later on, how vital this doctrine is to a satisfactory explanation of the Atonement, and how influential it is in harmonizing distinct aspects of biblical teaching, which would otherwise appear to be divergent.

The *Epistle to the Ephesians* prepares the way for this great doctrine as to the original relationship of our Lord to the world and to mankind. We are told that believers were "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 4). Otherwise, this epistle does but add the apostle's last testimony, given in the serene spirit which marks the victory of his universalism, to the efficacy of the cross as the means of reconciliation for both Jew and Gentile.

The *Pastoral Epistles* are, for our purpose, of little importance. In 1 Timothy i. 15, the apostle stamps with his approval the saying, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"; and in 1 Timothy vi. 13, he speaks of our Lord as *the* Martyr by pre-eminence: "Who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession."

Our survey of St. Paul's epistles has yielded the following results:

First. That our Lord's death is a propitiation, having reference to the wrath of God, but proceeding forth from His love, and intended to maintain and manifest His righteousness in the justification of men.

Second. That it is the culminating act of the self-identification of the Son with us, an identification so complete that He is made *sin* and a *curse* on our behalf.

Third. That this self-identification, including the death which completes it, has its basis in our Lord's original headship of mankind.[1]

Fourth. That it takes place through an act of self-emptying prior to, and manifest in, the Incarnation.

Fifth. That while the endurance of death is necessary, the spiritual principle which makes the sacrifice acceptable to God is the obedience which it expresses and consummates.

Sixth. That a reconciliation of the world to God, the blessings of which are appropriated by individuals through faith, is effected by it.

The *First Epistle of Peter* lays peculiar stress on the *sufferings* of Christ. The writer describes himself as a "witness of the *sufferings* of Christ" (v. 1). He exhorts his readers, "Forasmuch then as Christ *suffered* in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind" (iv. 1). And again, "But insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's *sufferings*, rejoice" (iv. 13). He says, that "Christ *suffered* on our behalf" (ii. 21), "for sins once" (iii. 18).

Apart from any dogmatic significance, there were strong practical motives for this special insistence. In the first place, the apostle was writing to persecuted Christians, who are said to be "put to grief in manifold temptations" (i. 7). It was natural, therefore, that he should encourage them with the thought of Christ as the great sufferer. Secondly, it is peculiarly appropriate that the apostle who once stumbled at the sufferings of Christ and became thereby a scandal to his Lord, whose denial, too, was owing to his reluctance to share his

[1] This subject will be dealt with more fully in chapter vii.

Master's sufferings and shame, should thus come to glory in them. The very fact of such a reparation must make us all the more careful in interpreting the precise dogmatic bearing of St. Peter's teaching. We find a clear statement (iii. 18), that "Christ suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God," and a similar passage in chapter ii. 24 lays emphasis upon our Lord's endurance of suffering, and upon His stripes as the means of our healing; but no definite statement is made as to the necessity in the divine nature which this representative suffering satisfied, nor as to what it was which gave to it this power of satisfaction. Indeed, when we come to look more closely, we shall find that the answer to the question, What was St. Peter's view of the satisfying principle of the Atonement? must be sought, not in his epistles, but in Isaiah. The two great passages on the Atonement, namely (i. 18–21), "Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, who through Him are believers in God, which raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God": and (ii. 21–24), "Because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not; but

committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously: who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye are healed": show that the apostle is simply adopting, and applying to our Lord, Isaiah liii., though with certain amplifications, as, "foreknown before the foundation of the world" (i. 20), and, "that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness" (ii. 24), which remind us of the characteristic teaching of St. Paul; and with certain touches, for example, "as of a lamb without blemish" (i. 19), taken from the Levitical sacrifices. The apostle's statement (i. 11), that the prophets searched "what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when It testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them," is evidently suggested primarily by Isaiah liii., and confirms the inference drawn from the other passages. We may therefore conclude with confidence, that the apostle's doctrine of the Atonement is that of Isaiah liii., which will claim consideration later on.

Of the *Epistles of St. John*, the first alone makes any reference to the Atonement, and this gives little clear indication as to what constitutes its essential principle. But we are told, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John ii. 1, 2). That the Atonement had an objective value is clear from its being termed "the propitiation"; though here, as in St. Paul's language, the writer carefully avoids all suggestion

from heathen propitiations by speaking of it, not as the propitiation of God, which might suggest an arbitrary demand, and even a selfish anger on His part, but as "a propitiation *concerning our* sins." Nothing further is said, but seeing that the epithet "righteous" is so applied to our Lord in His office of Advocate with the Father as clearly to imply that His righteousness has an important bearing upon the prevalence of His advocacy, the thought is naturally raised, that had the apostle entered more largely into the nature of the propitiation, righteousness would have been found to be at its heart also.

And this is confirmed when we find the apostle saying "I write unto you, my little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake" (ii. 12). The name of Christ includes all that belongs essentially to His manifested nature and character, rather than any particular act performed on our behalf, or suffering borne for us. That His death, however, is the fullest revelation of our Lord's name is shown by the declaration of the apostle, "Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us" (iii. 16). The statement that "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin" introduces an element from the Old Testament sacrifices. Our understanding of the way in which the blood of Christ cleanses, and of the virtue which resides in it, must depend in some measure upon the meaning we may find contained in those sacrifices considered in themselves. Meanwhile, it is sufficient to note the apostle's teaching, that cleansing from sin is effected by the *blood* of Christ.

The only other point which needs mention is the recurrence of the teaching, that "abiding in Christ" is the

condition of the Christian life, not only as the source of holiness, but as the ground of acceptance. *E.g.* chapter ii. 28: "And now, my little children, abide in Him; that, if He shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

The *Apocalypse* presents to us a series of pictures setting forth the conflict in history of Christian and anti-Christian forces, starting with the vision which reveals our Lord as King of right, and concluding with the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem coming down to earth from God, the final victory by which Christ becomes King in fact. His kingship rests partly on His nature, and partly on the experiences through which He has passed (i. 17, 18). "I am the first and the last, and the Living one," points to His nature. "I became dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore," points to His experience. The last clause, "I have the keys of death and of Hades," makes a claim, based upon His nature and experience, not only to divine dominion, but especially to a redemptive dominion over the enemies of life and of mankind. But not only is the Living one, who became dead, and liveth for evermore, the Lord of death, but He controls the issues of history (i. 19): "Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter."

As the visions of these things succeed one another, we find our Lord represented in opposition to the fierce and inhuman beasts which His power destroys, under the contrasted forms of the lion and the lamb (v. 5): "One of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of

David, hath overcome, to open the book and the seven seals thereof." Our Lord's invincible might is here set forth, but the vision at once passes to the image of the "Lamb as though it had been slain." Herein is set forth that His sacrifice of Himself is at once the foundation of our Lord's kingdom and the abiding power by which He maintains it. But something more than His sacrificial act and its abiding power is conveyed. The lamb-likeness, so to speak, of His character and of His rule, of its purity and its gentleness, is set forth. In this the writer of the Apocalypse is in fundamental agreement with the author of the Book of Daniel, although in striking superficial contrast with him. To the series of great historic beasts in Daniel, there succeeds One "like unto a son of man" (Dan. vii. 13). Where Daniel sets the humanity of the Christ in the forefront, the Apocalypse sets His lamb-likeness. But reverence, meekness, gentleness, all that is opposed to irrational strength and brute violence, are signified in common by the two visions. It is evident that the lamb-likeness of the King and His sacrificial function are not accidentally united. The character produces and is displayed in the sacrifice; the spirit of the sacrifice is perpetuated in the kingdom, and even becomes the distinctive mark of all its subjects, as is seen from the description of them: "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were purchased from among men, to be the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no lie: they are without blemish" (Rev. xiv. 4, 5). Hence surely the character and spirit of the Lamb are vital to the sacrifice

as bringing it about, as characterising it, and as moulding the kingdom which grows out of it. There are only two other passages to be noted in the Apocalypse. The ascription of praise, "Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood" (i. 5); and, "These are they which come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (vii. 14). Both of these refer not to the spiritual principle of the Atonement, but to its ethical consequences, and both trace these consequences to the *blood* of Christ, as does the First Epistle of St. John.

The *Epistle to the Hebrews* is the great apologetic for Christianity, as setting aside the divinely appointed sacrifices and priestly ordinances of Judaism. But, as is true of all the highest apologetic, it accomplishes its purposes by setting forth an idea large enough to embrace all that is true in the point of view of the objectors, at once finding points of contact with them, satisfying their legitimate demands, and transcending them. This necessitates, first, the co-ordination of our Lord's sacrifice and priestly ministry with those of the earthly sanctuary, and then the demonstration of the intrinsic superiority of the former over the latter. The co-ordination is effected by showing that the earthly ordinances and sanctuary were "copies" (ix. 23) of an original in the heavens, and that our Lord's sacrifice and priesthood are of that heavenly original. The superiority of the sacrifice is shown first in this, that it needs no repetition (vii. 27, ix. 26, x. 12); but above all, in the spiritual principle which it embodies (x. 1–10). The author boldly applies to the sacrifice of Christ a passage from the Psalms (Ps. xl. 6), where the

writer says, on the ground of his faith that God does not delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, "Lo, I am come to do Thy will, O God." It is this principle of obedience embodied in the sacrifice of Christ which constitutes its superiority over the Levitical sacrifices. The power of spiritual cleansing inherent in the blood of Christ is attributed to this, that "through the eternal Spirit *He offered Himself* without blemish unto God" (Heb. ix. 11–14; see also vii. 26). Self-oblation is the foundation, and in death the consummation, of a life of obedience. The greatest stress is laid upon that life of obedience. We are told, "Though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation" (v. 8, 9; see also ii. 10). Here the value of His sufferings is represented as being this, that they were the instruments of perfecting His obedience; and on the ground of that perfecting He exercises His priesthood. Another predestined result of His sufferings is the sympathy which unites Him with those whom He represents (ii. 17, 18): "Wherefore it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." Because of this spiritual trial our Lord has become "the Captain" of our faith, as well as its "Finisher" (xii. 2). But an essential part of the perfecting of the author of salvation through sufferings is that "He should taste death for every man" (ii. 9). The "for" of verse 10 seems to

show that, at the moment, the prominent thought with the writer was, that the obedience of Christ, and His sympathy with men who must die, were perfected through the experience of death. This perfecting necessitated the tasting of death—all that it essentially means, the sounding of the awful experience from which He was afterwards to deliver His brethren. As we have already seen, it was in and through the tasting of death that our Lord offered Himself to God with that consummated obedience in which the writer finds the merit of His sacrifice. But here, as elsewhere, a special necessity clearly is held to exist, that death should be the experience in which that supreme obedience should be perfected and displayed. Once more, in offering this sacrifice our Lord "bare the sins of many" (ix. 28), a phrase which must be interpreted subsequently when we come to the doctrine of the Old Testament, from which it is taken.

The other epistles of the New Testament throw no light upon our doctrine; but it is worth noting how the ethical spirit of St. James has been transformed by contact with Christ. The "perfect law" with him is "the law of liberty" (i. 25). It is the example of free obedience seen in our Lord which is the inspiration of his life.

We may now sum up the dogmatic teaching of the apostolic writings which we have reviewed.

1. All of them are unintelligible if the idea that our Lord's death was an objective sacrifice to God be taken away.

2. Only two of the writers, St. Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, give any express account of the element in the Atonement which gave to it its value

in the sight of God. These two agree that this element was consummated self-devotion and obedience, in complete identification of our Lord with our nature and the evils of our condition. But the other writers seem to be in implicit agreement; for St. Peter adopts the great Servant prophecy, in which, as we shall see, obedience is an essential consideration; St. John says that our Lord's *name* is the ground of forgiveness of sins, and His name is the manifestation of His spirit; and the Apocalypse makes lamb-likeness at once the expression of His spirit, the characteristic of His sacrifice, and the mark of His kingdom.

3. None of these writers makes any statement whatever that the merely passive endurance of suffering *as suffering*, or even of death, was the essential element in the Atonement. Yet all lay such emphasis upon the death of Christ as the ground of our salvation, that Dr. Denney is justified in saying that the answer to the question, "'What did Christ do for our sins?' can only be given in one word, 'He died for them.'"[1]

We must now glance at the *Acts of the Apostles*. While the sermons, apologies, and instructions reported therein deal for the most part, as might be expected, with the resurrection of our Lord and the Messianic sovereignty which is founded thereon, giving an evangelical interpretation to the ends of that sovereignty, they yet cast considerable light upon the process by which the apostolic doctrine of the Atonement was developed. It was founded upon the writings of the prophets, and especially upon Isaiah liii., as seen to be fulfilled in the death of Christ

[1] *Studies in Theology*, p. 105.

The following quotations establish this. The sermon of St. Peter (Acts iii. 18): "But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He thus fulfilled." And in verse 26, the designation "Servant" is applied to our Lord, as it is again in the prayer of the Church reported in chapter iv 24–31. Philip, the deacon, "preached Jesus" to the Ethiopian eunuch, beginning from Isaiah liii. (Acts viii. 26–36). See also the preaching of St. Peter to Cornelius (x. 43): "To Him bear all the prophets witness, that through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins." At Antioch in Pisidia, St. Paul appeals to the "voices of the prophets" (xiii. 27). So also in his apology before Agrippa (xxvi. 22, 23), where he cites the prophets as laying down that "the Christ must suffer." And, lastly, in his interview with the Jews at Rome (xxviii. 23), we are told of his "persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets."

The only other passage in the Acts of the Apostles which should be quoted is chapter xx. 28, where St. Paul speaks to the Ephesian elders of "the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood."

This repeated reference to the prophets, and especially to Isaiah liii., raises the important inquiry as to the factors which contributed to the development of the apostolic doctrine of the Atonement. Especially we are forced to ask whether that doctrine was the result of an accidental external difficulty, an artificial solution of the otherwise incomprehensible mystery of Christ's death, devised for the satisfaction of their own minds and as an

answer to Jewish objections; or whether it was due to an inward spiritual necessity, rooted both in the consciousness of our Lord as to His own mission and in the religious experience of His disciples. No simple answer can be given to this question. Doubtless the resurrection of our Lord did force upon the minds of the apostles the question, Wherefore, then, His death? Especially when they held, as we see in the case of St. Paul, at once that our Lord was sinless, and that death is the punishment of sin.

We need not shrink from admitting that this problem was an urgent one for the intellect of the apostles. It is by the raising of such problems, and by creating the spiritual insight to meet them, that the Spirit of Christ leads men "into all the truth." The doctrines of Christianity have not fallen ready-made from heaven, but have been the spoil carried off from spiritual struggles, the harvest of a spiritual insight at once bestowed and directed by the Spirit of God. When, then, modern rationalism declares that the doctrine of the Atonement is the solution of a practical theological problem presented to the apostles, we may cheerfully admit it, provided that all the factors which were present are allowed their due weight, and that the naturalness of the process is not used to disparage the value of the result. Nor need we attempt to minimise the importance of the fact that in seeking for the solution of the question, Wherefore the death of Christ? the apostles had the answer of Isaiah liii. ready to hand. Those who believe in inspiration, in the strict sense of the term, will be as glad to admit this as those who do not are eager to press it upon us. All we must

insist upon is, that it would have been impossible to interpret the tragedy of the cross in the light of Isaiah liii., had not the character, spirit, and mission of our Lord first suggested with irresistible force the fulfilment of the ideal of the Servant of Jehovah. Given both that fulfilment and the resurrection, and the doctrine of the Atonement would inevitably be suggested; but the fulfilment, and a fulfilment too real and impressive to be the work of the myth-making faculty, is as necessary to the doctrine as the resurrection.

Again, undoubtedly in proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah, an apologetic difficulty arose, which necessitated the doctrine of the Atonement. The ordinary Jew knew nothing of a Passion lying between the Messiah and the entrance upon His kingdom. In dealing with the Jew, it was therefore necessary to secure the application of Isaiah liii. to the Messiah, in order to establish the proposition which we find in the apologetic of both St. Peter and St. Paul, as reported in the Acts of the Apostles, "that the Christ must suffer." Even if the rendering "susceptible of suffering" be adopted for παθητός, the point of this is not affected; for if the Christ was not to be susceptible of suffering, it is clear that Isaiah liii. could not apply to Him, and in establishing the contrary St. Paul was clearing the ground for the application of that prophecy to our Lord as the Christ.

But when all this has been allowed, or rather even contended for, it fails to satisfy the facts. For critics like Dr. Martineau, the whole superstructure has risen more or less artificially upon the unhappy determination of the disciples to find in Jesus the Messiah. Had that

identification never taken place, the simple religion of Jesus need not have been spoiled by doctrines of the sacrificial and priestly mediation of Christ—doctrines, of course, which owe their origin, according to Dr. Martineau, to the Church, and not to our Lord. But a careful study of the apostolic writings will show that, however the doctrine of the Atonement may have been suggested it is the satisfaction, not of a mere intellectual difficulty, but of a profound spiritual need. Everywhere we meet with a new idea of God, the evidence of a new revelation of His glory. The barren unspirituality of Judaism has passed away with the quickening presence and teaching of our Lord. And with the new vision and worship of God has come the apprehension of a new and surpassingly intimate relationship of God to men—His Fatherhood. That relationship has not the immediacy with which Christ realised it. Both St. Peter (1 Pet. i. 3) and St. Paul (2 Cor. i. 3 and Eph. i. 3) speak of God as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," a phrase which, without any additional light upon it from the gospels, is sufficient to show that the apostles learned the Fatherhood of God from Christ;[1] that they learned it not as a dogma, but through the realised Sonship of Christ; and that they understood it to be the relationship in a peculiar sense of God to Christ. And yet, as realised in Him, Fatherhood expresses the relationship in which God stands to all believers. But with the new vision of God's glory, and the apprehension of this new and wonderful

[1] In contradiction to Pfleiderer, *Ur-Christenthum*, who assumes that St. Paul is the author of the religion of Sonship. See Bruce, *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p. 199.

relationship, there rises up a new sense of sin, of its guilt, its heinousness, its universality, its deep-seatedness. In the moment when union with God for the first time seems a prize within reach, a new consciousness of sin hinders men from grasping it. Yet we are told in the Acts of the Apostles that our Lord came preaching "good tidings of peace" (Acts x. 36). On what ground could sinful men enter into the enjoyment of a relation that seemed rightfully to belong solely to the sinless Christ? Only on the twofold ground, first, of their incorporation in Christ; and, secondly, of an adequate satisfaction made by Christ, and in a sense made by them in Christ, to God for sin. The new confidence towards God, and the inspiration of new and all-conquering ethical life, are not due solely to the revelation of God's Fatherhood made by Christ, and could never have been brought about by that revelation standing alone, but they equally needed grounding in an Atonement offered to God by Christ, and were brought about only by faith in that Atonement.

Once more, it seems impossible to suppose that, even with all these operating motives, the belief in the Atonement could have arisen, had it not been founded upon the express teaching of our Lord. Rationalistic critics make St. Paul the creator of the mediatorial theology of the Church. Could St. Paul have created it? He himself repudiates any such claim. He says to the Corinthians, "I delivered unto you first of all that which *also I received*, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3). It may be contended that he received it as a spiritual intuition, which he attributed to the inspiration of our Lord; and Galatians i. 12, where

the apostle says of his gospel, "Neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ," may be quoted in support of this view. Even the language of 1 Corinthians xi. 23, where the apostle prefaces his account of the institution of the Lord's Supper by the declaration, "For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you," has been pressed into the service; and some have been found to argue that St. Paul, acting under a fancied inspiration, was the author of this sacrament, and not our Lord!

The three passages have sufficient verbal likeness to permit of confusion, yet closer examination reveals not only in the apostle's thought, but even in his language, convincing reason for holding the meaning to be distinctly different in each case. The Galatian epistle is devoted to making plain the evangelic interpretation of the facts of our Lord's life and death. That interpretation of the nature and means of redemption is the apostle's gospel; and it came to him, not from man, who, as he shows, had neither the opportunity nor the power to teach him, but from our Lord. In the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, the choice of the preposition *ἀπό* seems intended to claim that our Lord was the *source* of the apostle's knowledge; but nothing is said as to the means by which it was conveyed to him. There might have been human testimony, so long as that testimony exercised upon St. Paul the power of a divine revelation. And there were good reasons for ignoring the means and emphasizing the source. The division as to his apostleship, and the lawless abuses which had defiled the celebration of the Lord's Supper, made it most necessary

for St. Paul to impress upon the Church both the divine ordination of the sacrament and his own divine authority in enforcing it. But in our text (1 Cor. xv. 3) the apostle noticeably omits the words "from the Lord," and adds to his statement about our Lord's death a list of His appearances after the resurrection, which he had evidently gained by careful inquiries made from living witnesses.

And, further, the view now criticised seems not only intrinsically improbable, but it is condemned by very clear evidence from the apostle's writings. Can we conceive, for example, the possibility of such a rebuke as is found in Galatians ii. 14–21 being administered to and received by St. Peter, had the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice been a new idea to him, or had he known that, though our Lord had spoken of His impending death, and had been preoccupied with it, He had never represented it to His disciples as an Atonement? The supposition seems absolutely incredible. Not only reverence, but regard for all the probabilities, forbids us to treat Jesus, after the manner of advanced critics of our day, as a lay figure, to be dressed without resistance in all the dogmas and imaginations invented or accepted by those apostles, whose first trust was loyalty to His teaching and His spirit. Such a Christ utterly fails to account for Christianity. Exaggeration and misconception we can conceive as having possibly taken place, but not the acceptance of a whole theory of Atonement without any root in the teaching of our Lord, especially when, taking the lowest ground, the very conditions which suggested the Atonement to the disciples in retrospect must as naturally have suggested it to our Lord in prospect.

II. The Gospels

We may therefore come to the study of the gospels, fully convinced of the general authenticity of the teaching on this subject which they attribute to our Lord.

In what light, then, does our Lord set forth His death?

The *Gospel of St. John* supplies us with the fullest answer in many respects to this question.

First of all, our Lord's death is a voluntary surrender of life on His part, and He is the object of the Father's love on the ground of this voluntary self-surrender: "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I of My Father" (x. 17, 18). And this self-surrender is for the life of the world. It is this in a twofold way:

1. It effects deliverance from sin and its consequences. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life" (iii. 14, 15).

2. It leads to the direct impartation to believers of His body and blood as the source of spiritual life. See the whole discourse (vi.), ending with the solemn declaration, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves" (ver. 53).

There is a necessity for His death in itself; for the "Good shepherd layeth down His life for the sheep"

(x. 11; also ver. 15). Yet our Lord sees in His own death, unique in its importance for the world though it is, the supreme example of a law of self-renunciation, so universal as to include under it all men, and not only all men, but all living things. He says, when the request of certain Greeks to see Him was announced, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (xii. 24, 25).

In this relation the feet-washing described in the thirteenth chapter is of great importance. The narrative is introduced with the strange preface, "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came forth from God, and goeth unto God, riseth from supper, and layeth aside His garments; and He took a towel, and girded Himself" (xiii. 3, 4). It is clear that in these words we are informed of the state of mind in which our Lord was at the time of the feet-washing, and that it was a state of peculiar exaltation. He had the sense of power and of a divine mission, and the prescience of victory. And His act of lowly self-renunciation was a conscious representation of the spirit in which He used His power and would use His victory, of the purpose of His divine mission. Our Lord sets forth His action as an example to be imitated by His disciples. "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call Me, Master, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (xiii. 12–14). It is an example, not as

an isolated and accidental action, but as an outward representation of the whole ministry of our Lord.

And here is its immense importance for the discovery of the spiritual principle of the Atonement. The feet-washing represents, and must have been intended by our Lord to represent, equally the spirit of the life of which it was the last act, and of the death to which it was a prelude. Life and death are united and inspired by one common spirit, —the carrying out of a mission for God in self-renouncing service for men. In that solemn and awful moment it was possible and natural to utter in one act the whole secret of the spirit which made His life and death what they were. It is as self-renouncing obedience and service that our Lord looks back upon His life and forward to His death. Thus, anticipating the end in His high-priestly prayer, He says, "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do" (xvii. 4). Surely this confident claim must be taken as the key to the meaning of the great word upon the cross, which St. John alone records—"It is finished" (xix. 30). The whole tenor of our Lord's teaching, as given in the fourth gospel, goes to show that He looked upon His death as the consummated expression of the spirit of His life, as the completion of a great self-renunciation, of which obedience to the Father was the animating principle. Through all this ministry, seen as crowned by death, our Lord discharges a twofold mediatorial office: "I manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world" (xvii. 6); "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (xiv. 6).

When we remember how confidently it has been asserted that the view of our Lord and of His work presented to us in the fourth gospel is radically different from that of the other three, it is striking that the correspondence between the *Synoptic Gospels* and the fourth, as to our Lord's declarations about His death, is so close as to be even minute. To begin with, there is the same doctrine as to the mediatorial office of our Lord which was given in the fourth gospel: "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 27; also Luke x. 22). A saying which in itself is a sufficient bridge between the Synoptists and St. John, so far as their general view of the person and work of our Lord is concerned.

But for our immediate subject, we must place foremost the institution of the Lord's Supper, as recorded in all the gospels (Matt. xxvi. 26, Mark xiv. 22, and Luke xxii. 19). In this rite we are taught, *first*, that our Lord's death is the cause of forgiveness of sins; *second*, that salvation is received by the inward impartation of the body and blood of Christ—a teaching by outward and visible signs of the doctrine of John vi.

Again, our Lord's death is represented in the Synoptists, as in St. John, as the supreme case of a general spiritual law of self-renunciation, though that law is not extended, as in John xii. 24, to irrational nature. "Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose

it: and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it" (Matt. xvi. 24, 25).[1]

Again, how closely does the saying, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 25–28), correspond to the sign of the feet-washing in St. John! And again, "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth" (Luke xxii. 27). The climax of this ministry is that Christ gives His life "a ransom for many." Service culminates in self-oblation. The ministry which blesses men ends in the payment of a ransom which frees them from the bondage of the enemy. This spirit of our Lord is an example for His followers: "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. xxiii. 11, 12). Again, Luke ii. 49, if it be rendered, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" and Matthew xii. 50,[2] "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother," join with John iv. 34, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work," in setting forth the essential spirit of our Lord's life and death. In all these respects, and for our subject they are the most vital, the Synoptic teaching is identical with that of St. John. The whole emphasis in both rests upon the spirit, rather than on the suffering of the cross. Yet here also, finally, there is the same insistence on the necessity of that suffering

[1] See also Mark viii. 34, 35; Luke xiv. 25–27; Matt. x. 37–39; Luke ix. 23, 24; and Luke xvii. 33.

[2] See also Mark iii. 34 and Luke viii. 21.

in itself. He "must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things" (Matt. xvi. 21, Mark viii. 31, Luke ix. 22). There is a cup to be drunk by Him (Matt. xx. 22, Mark x. 38), a baptism with which He must be baptized (Luke xii. 50).

But there are two fresh subjects of importance which the references to the Passion in the Synoptic Gospels bring before us. The *first* may well be considered in connexion with a very striking passage in Mark x. 32–34. The announcement there made by our Lord of His approaching Passion is prefaced by a reminiscence, evidently from an eye-witness, of something startling in the bearing of our Lord as He contemplated it: "And they were in the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going before them: and they were amazed; and they that followed were afraid." Our Lord's bearing, it is manifest, revealed the greatness of a spiritual crisis through which He was passing. The vision of the cross at that moment took possession of Him. And the bearing which struck amazement into those who followed Him seems to have portrayed the strenuous resolution, the confidence of victory, the self-surrender to the will of His Father, which His subsequent announcement expressed in words. That the self-surrender was not passionless, and that the necessity of His death was felt by Him to be overwhelming, is evident from the intensity of the rebuke He administered to St. Peter on a previous occasion: "Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art a stumblingblock unto Me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men" (Matt. xvi. 23).

This raises the question, What was the mental attitude of our Lord Himself to His Passion? and to what extent was it present to His mind throughout the whole of His

ministry? It will be seen, as we proceed, that this question has a distinct bearing upon our inquiry for the spiritual principle of the Atonement. Was our Lord preoccupied from the first with the thought of His death as the paramount object of the Incarnation? and did He look upon the offering of Himself in death as something so essentially distinct from the obedience of His life as to belong to quite another category? The advocates of objective doctrines of the Atonement often insist that He did, and such sayings as "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke xii. 50) may be quoted in support of it. To a certain extent, undoubtedly, it is true. The whole spirit of our Lord in approaching death, His declarations about it, and, not least, the institution of the Lord's Supper, all establish clearly that He looked upon it as, in a very special sense, the supreme act and object of His life, and that there was a necessity that the spirit which made Him well-pleasing to the Father should have its crowning manifestation in a unique experience of death. On the other hand, we must not exaggerate this. To do so is to overlook that, except in John ii. 19, "Destroy this temple," etc., and iii. 14, "As Moses lifted up," etc., there are no indications that our Lord ever spoke of His death until within the last year of His life, and but rarely even then. It was only on St. Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ," etc., that our Lord began to reveal the mystery of His coming sufferings and death; and whenever He announced it or alluded to it, there are plain indications, as we have seen, that He spoke under the influence of deep and special emotion.

Thus, however He recognised from the first the necessity of His death to the full accomplishment of His work, it is clear that He did not even allow His own mind to be absorbed in it, much less the minds of His disciples. To suppose otherwise would be not only untrue to the narrative[a], but would introduce total disorder into our conceptions of our Lord's person and His work. Before the Son could open the way to the Father by His atoning death, so that we may come to Him, the Father, to whom we are to come, must be revealed by the testimony of the Son's life. The end comes before the way. The former is as essential as the latter, and supplies the necessary preparation for it; and to suppose that while our Lord dealt with the paramount concerns of life, the revelation of the Father, the manifestation of the kingdom of the Father upon earth, and the training of the apostles who were to secure its prevalence, He was treating all this in His own mind as of secondary importance to His death, and without spiritual and essential connexion with it, is not only irrational in itself, but, because it is so, would, if we adopted the supposition, entirely destroy the worth of our Lord's life as an example and inspiration to men.

The conditions of our perfection are that we should give ourselves to the experiences and concerns of life, as they come to us in that providential order which is brought about by the development of our own spiritual nature, with its visions of truth and duty, in conjunction with outward occasions and opportunities. We are prepared for the more important work of to-morrow by being filled with an adequate sense of the importance of the work of to-day. Above all, the fidelity of our living prepares for the conflict of dying;

and he who allows the prospect of death to possess his soul while the work of life remains to be done is not only unwise, but undutiful. There comes a time when our self-revelation draws nigh to being complete; when our duties seem to approach their full discharge; when, as we look on farther, it is not to the putting forth of new powers, or the undertaking of fresh tasks, but to the vision of death, as the last foe to be encountered. Then, and by that means, the Spirit of God Himself supplies the needful preparation for death. Were all this reversed in our Lord's case, because of the transcendent importance of the Atonement, it would involve such a radical difference between the spiritual conditions of His life and those of our own, as would mean that His nature was absolutely different from ours. Then we should be denied the inspiration which sees in the sacrifice of the cross the last and crowning triumph of a lifelong surrender to the Father.

Happily, not only the reason of things, but the Scripture records, forbid us for one moment to entertain the thought. There is not one word which gives even a hint that our Lord looked upon the suffering of death as something in its nature essentially distinct from the other experiences of His life, although His death stands out as an experience apart because of its necessity, its finality, and its awfulness. There is not one word to show that the spirit in which our Lord offered Himself upon the cross differed at all from the spirit in which He prayed in the garden, in which He set His face steadfastly to go up to Jerusalem (Luke ix. 51), in which He overcame the tempter at the outset of His

ministry, in which He discharged all the duties of His life, nay, in which He entered upon that life itself,—save that in His death He is face to face with the last and unique call to self-surrender, and meets that call with a completeness which is the ripest fruit of a lifelong habit of self-renunciation. Indeed, if we weigh the report of St. John, our Lord, on the eve of His Passion, might almost be said to be more concerned with the spirit in which the work of His life had been done than with His death. In the high-priestly prayer there is no clear mention of death, but only of an accomplished life-work, and of approaching glorification.[1] It would be erroneous indeed to draw this inference; but, at least, that prayer is evidence sufficient to qualify all assertions that our Lord regarded His life lightly in comparison with His death. Finally, there is nothing to show that our Lord considered that the offering which He presented to God in death differed *in kind* from that which He presented in life—not the slightest evidence, for example, that He treated obedience as the offering of life, and suffering, as such, as the offering of death; but on the contrary, everything to show that He laid all stress upon the spirit with which He met both doing and suffering, life and death (although there was a special necessity that that spirit should be manifested in His voluntary submission to death), the spirit, namely, of consecration, which was as active in its co-operation with the will of God in death as in life: "Thy will be done." The revelation of our Lord's self-

[1] The phrase ἁγιάζω ἐμαυτόν seems most naturally to have reference to the consecrated obedience which was the animating spirit of our Lord's life and death, rather than to have the special sacrificial import which is sometimes claimed for it

consciousness from first to last is the sufficient foundation for the apostolic doctrine, that the vital principle of the Atonement is "obedience unto death—the death of the cross."

The other subject, namely, our Lord's own teaching as to the relation of His death to the fulfilment of prophecy, is prominently brought before us by St. Luke. St. Matthew has recorded, in his report of the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord's declaration, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v. 17). And this saying supplies one of the great motives of his gospel, which from first to last shows how prophecy was fulfilled in the various incidents of our Lord's life and death. But St. Luke represents our Lord as Himself laying stress on the fulfilment of prophecy by His Passion. In the account of the transfiguration, we are told that Moses and Elijah spoke with Him "of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke ix. 31). He further reports that, after the Last Supper, our Lord said: "For I say unto you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, And He was reckoned with transgressors: for that which concerneth Me hath fulfilment" (Luke xxii. 37). Our Lord rebuked the two, as they journeyed to Emmaus, by saying, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?" (Luke xxiv. 25, 26.) And thereupon we are told that, "beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (ver. 27). So also, in the account

of the final discourse of our Lord with the disciples, our Lord is said to have declared: "These are My words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their mind, that they might understand the Scriptures; and He said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day," etc. (Luke xxiv. 44–49.)

These narratives, for all who hold them authentic, establish that our Lord Himself understood His death to be the fulfilment of prophecy, and that He accepted the teachings of prophecy as giving the key to its meaning. Especially noteworthy is His quotation of the words, "And He was reckoned with transgressors," taken from Isaiah liii. 12, showing generally the great importance of Isaiah liii. for the interpretation of our Lord's death, and more especially the stress which He laid upon sharing the lot of, and even being identified with, the transgressors. Our Lord's own saying here is the foundation for the strong statements of St. Paul, that our Lord was "made sin for us," and that "He redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." By these quotations of St. Luke, therefore, we are furnished with the connecting link between the teaching of the New Testament and that of the Old on our subject, and are referred by our Lord Himself to the Old Testament, if we would understand the meaning of His death.

III. The Prophecy of the Servant of Jehovah (Isaiah. liii.)

Coming, then, to the testimony of the Old Testament, our starting point must be Isaiah liii., upon which, as we have seen, both our Lord and His apostles rest their teaching. The earliest application of this prophecy to our Lord is said to have been made by John the Baptist (John i. 29), who, pointing to Jesus, said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" That Isaiah liii. suggested this saying will be clear to those who observe how St. John and the Synoptists unite in representing Isaiah xl.–lxvi. as the handbook by which the Baptist understood both the kingdom of God and his own mission in relation to it. St. John states (chap. i. 23) that the Baptist replied to the deputation sent from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who art thou?" "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet." And the other three gospels, in introducing their account of the work of the Baptist, quote the same passage from Isaiah xl. If it be true that Isaiah xl.–lxvi. had thus profoundly influenced the Baptist in coming to understand his vocation, the difficulty as to his having been the first apparently to foresee the Passion and to declare its sacrificial purpose seems to be removed.

Isaiah liii., which describes the redemptive sufferings of the Servant of Jehovah, stands connected with Isaiah xlii., which describes his character, his meekness, his hopefulness and patience, his undaunted strength, above all, his

unbroken fellowship with God, and his perfect endowment with the Spirit of God. "Behold My servant, whom I uphold; My chosen, in whom My soul delighteth: I have put My spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment in truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law" (Isa. xlii. 1–4).

Who that reads the gospel story can fail to see how speaking a likeness this is of our Lord? Is it too much to suppose that if the Baptist were thus saturated with the great Servant prophecy, our Lord's perfect realisation of the character of the servant should at once be made clear to his eye; or that when the correspondence was discerned he should feel sure, knowing his generation as he did,—its hollow legalism, its cruel bigotry and worldly conventionality,—that where the character of the servant was, the fate of the servant would be also? Forecasting thus our Lord's death on the ground of His character, the prophecy would naturally come to the Baptist's help in discovering the significance of that death. Upon this supposition, the improbability of the saying attributed to him is removed and we thus have additional evidence of the importance of Isaiah liii. for our subject. This being so, we must take pains carefully to consider the prophecy, and not only its letter, but the spiritual conditions giving rise to it, through which its full meaning will stand out in clearer light.

It is well known that there are several distinct

opinions as to the original application of the prophecy. So-called rationalistic interpretations have been divided between the three views: (1) that it applies to the nation, whose sufferings are due to its vocation as the servant of Jehovah, and have atoning value; (2) that it applies to the elect remnant, whose undeserved sufferings are borne on behalf of the sinful community of which they are a part; and (3) that it refers to some martyr prophet whose sufferings the writer idealises. Supporters of the application to our Lord have usually endeavoured to repel all these suggestions, and have set up against them an explanation which treats the prophecy purely as a divine oracle, given by inspiration quite apart from any natural process of the prophet's mind.

The general intellectual basis of both sides has been the same faulty supposition, that the admission of the human is the expulsion of the divine, that by establishing the naturalness of the process the value of the result is destroyed. Such a view is unworthy of any enlightened supernaturalism, destroys great part of the spiritual value of the prophecy, and leaves the general conditions of prophecy a hopeless enigma, a mere miracle of external influence, unrelated to the general spiritual training of the prophet's mind. Where the prophetic inspiration is the highest, the prophet, even humanly speaking, is at his best, utilising all that is truest in the convictions of his times, and all that is noblest in his own character and education, to enable him to set forth the ways of God to men. An enlightened faith will perceive how comprehensive is the influence of divine inspiration, how it makes all powers tributary, shapes the conditions which mould

them, making all human culture an instrument for perceiving the truth revealed—in short, will recognise that while in general all the spiritual faculties of man have their part in receiving revelation, the special discipline of each succeeding age fits men to receive the special vision of truth which that age needs. We must avail ourselves, to a certain extent, of all the four interpretations of Isaiah liii., if we are to understand its meaning. It is necessary to make this position good, not for critical reasons, which lie beyond our present scope, but because we shall find, what for our inquiry is most important, how representative of the people for whom he atones is the Servant of Jehovah.

To begin with—assuming here as established the modern view, which I am constrained to regard as made good, that Isaiah xl.–lxvi. is a distinct work, written by an unknown prophet of the exile—the great problem of the Hebrew nation, its divine vocation and future, must have pressed upon the prophet's mind.[1]

A careful study of the prophetic writings will establish the fact that Messianic prophecy, in the widest sense of the term, is by no means an arbitrary or unaccountable product, but that it works upon given material according to fixed spiritual laws. It concentrates itself at each successive period upon that institution of the national life which has at the time the greatest prominence and influence. In the life of Israel every great public function, prophetic, priestly,

[1] If the traditional view of the authorship be maintained, it will still be possible to accept a large part of the explanation of the genesis of the Servant prophecy given in these pages, provided it is held—with the best recent upholders of the traditional view—that Isaiah was carried forward in spirit, and lived by anticipation in the midst of the condition of things which he describes.

kingly, has a mediatorial office, reveals God and enables men to draw near to Him; but at different epochs, now one, now another of these is the more prominent, expressing more fully the characteristic life of the nation, influencing it more powerfully, the centre of its attention and its hopes. At one time it is the prophetic, at another —*e.g.* the great period of the kingdom—it is the kingly, at another time,—*e.g.* at the restoration of Jerusalem—it is the priestly, which engrosses the eyes of men. And immediately this is the case, that particular institution, office, or function becomes the special object of Messianic prophecy. The prophet seizes upon its ideal, exposes the shortcoming of the reality, and proceeds—upon his general conviction that the glory of the Lord must be fully revealed, and that the fellowship between God and men, which all institutions serve, must be perfected—to project into the future a fulfilment of the ideal, and with the fulfilment a realisation of its highest ends. Thus, in Deuteronomy, Moses says, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me; him shall ye hear." At the epoch when prophetic influence is at its height, prediction seizes upon it, and makes its complete establishment the characteristic mark of the realised kingdom of God. At the time of the kings come the predictions of the Messianic kingdom, culminating in those of Isaiah, whose picture of the king and his rule transcends the highest performances, and makes good the terrible shortcomings with which the history of the house of David and his own experience have made him familiar. Last of all, when Zechariah writes, the priesthood and the temple occupy the public mind. And immediately we have the vision of Zechariah iii., in

which the white linen robes of Joshua, the high priest, are seen to be filthy, and the Lord promises, "Behold, I will bring forth My servant the Branch. . . . And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day" (vers. 3, 8, 9). Thus the general procedure of Messianic prophecy may be stated to be this, that it takes up the most powerful factor of the nation's higher life from time to time, and that it proceeds, first to idealise the real, then to predict the realisation of the ideal. If it be objected that this is to lessen the divine wonder of the phenomenon of prophecy, the answer is, that the power to seize upon the meaning and possibilities of the highest institutions, and the unfaltering assurance that they shall be fulfilled, are just the two most difficult things, and the two highest gifts of the Spirit of God; also, that to find a method and law in inspiration, resembling, though transcending, the ordinary processes of divine education, is to satisfy and not to dethrone a reasonable faith.

But there is a necessary interaction between the institutions or offices which serve a nation and the nation which they serve. Let the nation lose its vigour, or be cast down, and even the highest offices, such as the prophetic, kingly, or priestly, will cease to absorb attention for the lack of a worthy object upon which these offices may spend themselves. Let the nation fail, and though prophets and kings may continue to serve it, the glory of their vocation must suffer a temporary eclipse. Let the Church be disorganised, and the priesthood or ministry which edified it, while in a sense more necessary than ever, will be largely shorn of its strength, because of the blighting of that faith and aspiration of which it is the organ and

mouthpiece. Then attention will be withdrawn from the special office to fix itself upon the nation or Church, to find out its calling, to set forth its ideal, and to awaken once more the insight, the courage, and the consecration which are necessary to its realisation. Thus, at the time of the Captivity, the endangering of the nation forced into prominence the question what spiritual purpose it was intended to serve, and in what way the terrible experience through which it was passing could further that purpose. So it came to pass that the greatest spiritual problem to deutero-Isaiah was to understand that vocation of Israel among the nations which was at once the explanation of its past and the guarantee of its future existence. Hence the revelation to the prophet of the prophetic office of Israel for the world is the great subject of these chapters and it stands in a vital, spiritual connexion with the opening proclamation of the book, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God" (xl. 1). The confident recognition of the mission, and the joyful assurance that God will open the way for its discharge, are inseparably bound together. When Jehovah calls Israel "My servant" (xli. 8; see also xlix. 3), the necessary consequence is "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" (xli. 10).

It will be seen, therefore, that the general law of the highest Old Testament prophecy has a new instance of its working in Isaiah xl.–lxvi. Attention is transferred to the nation, then its ideal is discerned, and finally the fulfilment of that ideal is foretold. Again and again

the servant of Jehovah is said to be the nation (*e.g.* xliii. to xliv. 2, 21; xlv. 4 *et seq.*); most emphatically in chapter xlix. 3, where the nation is represented as saying, "He said unto me, Thou art My servant; Israel, in whom I will be glorified." But at times a process of individualisation takes place, especially in Isaiah xlii. and lii. 13 to liii. In the former it is not so marked as to make it absolutely impossible to understand the description as applying to the nation; but in Isaiah liii. the two have become incompatible, for the servant is there said to be stricken "for the transgression of *My people*" (ver. 8). But it is not accidental that Isaiah xlii. and liii., which describe the character and the experiences of one who is the "servant of Jehovah" by pre-eminence, grow out of the apprehension and exposition of the function of the nation; and we may be sure that however, in their soaring, they may leave the nation behind, yet the tie between the nation and the individual is never entirely broken in the prophet's mind. There is a solidarity between the two. The national calling suggests finally the individual in whom its ideal glory is displayed; and although he stands out as a distinct personality, yet the qualities which characterise him are those in which the nation should find its true life, and its experiences will, in the degree that it approaches the ideal, approximate to his. Hence the individual "servant of Jehovah" is the natural and spiritual head of the nation, the embodiment of its ideal.

Again, the position of the faithful remnant who alone shadow forth the true ideal of the nation must have been an urgent practical problem to the prophet. The verse of the psalmist, "Also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy:

for Thou renderest to every man according to his work" (Ps. lxii. 12), is the utterance of a cardinal principle of Hebrew faith. But this world was commonly understood to be the sphere in which this exact retribution was meted out, and hence the difficulties which the inequalities and inequities of this present life raised in religious minds. The general conviction of the direct relation of suffering to sin made the problem graver even than that of retributive justice. The Book of Job shows how pressing the question was, even in cases of ordinary misfortune. How much more serious then did it become, when, as here, the faithful few were involved in the common suffering which was the deliberate divine chastisement of the unfaithfulness of the mass! What was the explanation of the chastisement of those who had striven to be true to the national calling, and even of those who had actively enforced that calling upon their worldly countrymen? With his conviction of the relation of suffering to sin, and his knowledge of the innocency of the faithful few, it could hardly be otherwise than that the hypothesis of vicarious suffering, of the godly on behalf of the ungodly, should suggest itself as a possible explanation to the prophet's mind. But even supposing it to be dismissed without a moment's entertainment, the very suggestion would create a conception to be applied when an adequate subject should be found.

Again, such a spectacle as that of the prophet Jeremiah, exposed to lifelong persecution at the hands of an unbelieving nation on account of his fidelity to the divine commission,—and Jeremiah was only the most conspicuous of a class,—would naturally provide the

prophet with material upon which his imagination might work.

And once more, during this period of national apostasy, chastisement, and dawning revival, there would of necessity be raised, for a mind such as the prophet's, the deeper questions relating to sin, to reconciliation, and to forgiveness. We know that the predecessors of this prophet had never rested with satisfaction upon the sacrificial ceremonialism of the temple. Their work, as we shall shortly see, had been to enforce the ethical responsibility and duties, both of the community and of individuals, upon the conscience of the nation. Such a task might lead them to look upon priestly and sacrificial institutions as of little value. But the Messianic vision of Zechariah iii., to which reference has already been made, shows that there was another course open to the prophetic mind; namely, while maintaining the attitude of dissatisfaction with the ordinary ritual of atonement, to regard it as the type and pledge of a worthier satisfaction made in a more ethical spirit by a nobler victim. And this is the case with the writer of Isaiah liii.

Such seem to me to have been evidently the most powerful factors which naturally contributed to the creation of the great "servant" prophecies of Isaiah xlii. and liii. But let there be no mistake; these factors can no more *explain* the prophecy than can the forces known to physics and chemistry explain the phenomena of life. It is necessary to detect and recognise their presence, for *they are there*; but the living phenomenon transcends them. And so it is with the prophecy before us. It is a creation of the Spirit of God working upon, in, and through the

spiritual consciousness of a man, utilising all that He finds there to the production of a masterpiece, which infinitely surpasses all the elements which are taken up into it,—first, in its grander content, and, secondly, in that it lives. And this living content is not the natural result of the painful process of a professional theologian, but is an immediate presentation made to the spiritual eye of the prophet: differing from poetic fancy in this, that it mysteriously carries with it the assurance of its own unquestionable reality. Thus in a surpassing and supernatural vision there is set before the prophet the figure of one glorious personality, endowed with all the perfections of holiness, distinct from the nation, and even from the elect of it, yet so embodying and fulfilling the divine ideal of its character and calling as to be mystically one with it; the supreme martyr and sin-bearer of history, whose offering includes for the first time all the elements of a complete and final satisfaction to God for sin.

We must now give a brief exposition of the story of the servant, and then pass to an examination of the doctrine of Atonement which is based upon his sufferings.

It is unnecessary to deal with the description of the "servant" in chapter xlii., and reference has already been made to the greatness of the spiritual qualities which are there ascribed to him. But, as we look more closely at them, it is easy to see that the very perfection of those qualities would cause him to be lightly esteemed by the worldly-minded or bigoted, and would leave him defenceless against their attacks. It is the greatness and not the poverty of his spirit which keeps him from striving or crying; but such greatness is only reverenced by those in

whom there is, at least, some corresponding greatness of soul. Thus, although the first vision passes from before us without the hint of a calamity, nay, on the other hand with the assurance both of the greatness of his vocation and of divine support in it, we are not surprised that the scene changes later on, and that we hear tidings of an unparalleled tragedy.

The narrative of chapter liii. becomes more vivid when regarded, not as told by the prophet, but as put by him into the mouth of the people themselves, as explaining and, to some extent, apologising for their crime, on the ground that they knew not what they did. When the servant preached, no man believed. In his presence no man saw the arm of the Lord revealed. On the contrary, the people say, "We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (ver. 4). Being persuaded of this, men were ready, as usual, if not actively to co-operate with God in carrying out the punishment which they judged He desired to inflict, at least to stand aside and allow it without hindrance to take place. How was it that they lent themselves to the crime done against the servant; that instead of beholding the arm of the Lord revealed in him, they thus esteemed him "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted"? They are made to give the grounds for their mistake in verses 2, 3. His arising was not fitted to impress them, he was but "a tender plant"; nor did there seem to be any suitable preparation or environment for him, he was "as a root out of a dry ground." And his appearance was in keeping with the unpromising nature of his surroundings: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty

that we should desire him." His experiences intensified the unfavourable impression made by his first appearance. Instead of winning allegiance and reputation, he was "despised, and rejected of men." Instead of the radiant marks of the divine favour upon him, he was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief";[1] and this wrought such disfigurement in him that he was despised as "one from whom men hide their face" with instinctive repulsion.

According to the popular theology of the times, such an appearance and reception denoted the punishment of God; and the hideous iniquity of the treatment which he received at the hands of men, which the narrators do not take personally to themselves, but which they did nothing to prevent, was a final confirmation of the view they had taken. But his exaltation at the hand of God followed upon his humiliation, and then it was brought home to the people who had rejected him, that he had suffered, not for his own sins, but for theirs: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; He hath put him to grief" (ver. 10). "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." By this interpretation of the chapter, greatly increased naturalness and vividness are gained.

But what is the doctrine of Atonement which is taught?

It is evident, to begin with, that it has relationship to

[1] Heb., "sickness."

God: "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (ver. 6); He makes his "soul an offering for sin" (ver. 10).

In the next place, it is clear that he comes under, and suffers from, punitive conditions which are due, not to his own sins, but to those of the people: "The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed," etc. (vers. 5, 6). He is the greatest example of vicarious suffering. Such suffering is in general common enough; in the servant's case its intensity and its absolute undeservedness are unique. We might be inclined to add that its direct imposition by God is also unique; but here we must be extremely careful not to exaggerate the teaching of the chapter. In one sense we cannot indeed exaggerate its teaching, for the suffering *is* directly inflicted by God; but we must remember that to the prophet's mind all suffering, not only of unrighteous, but of righteous men, was also directly inflicted by God. The sovereignty of God, for the prophet, is absolute, constant, universal, ever-active, and as minute in its ordering of the whole life experience of each as it is all-embracing in its world-wide range. The divine ordination is here unique; but it is on the ground of the spiritual importance and the tragic undeservedness of this dispensation towards the servant, and not because God has no hand in or will as to the sufferings of ordinary men. Were it not for this underlying assumption, that the life experiences of all men are ordained according to the pleasure of God, the problem of the Book of Job would be vitally modified; and that it is the assumption of Isaiah xl.–lxvi. is clear from the declaration made to Cyrus (xlv. 6, 7): "I am the Lord, and there is none else:

I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I am the Lord, that doeth all these things"; and from the message (xl. 8) following upon the statement that "all flesh is grass," etc.: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." In an exposition like this the metaphysical and ethical question raised by this doctrine cannot be considered. Suffice that the active agency of Jehovah in the bruising of the servant is not in itself exceptional, but only the most dread example of the decrees of a will so sovereign as to make God, for the prophet, as he looks upon the world from the divine standpoint, the sole actor in history; and that none of the ethical considerations which must qualify this view can ever invalidate it.

In the third place, in what is the atoning efficacy of the servant's death said to consist? Before the answer is complete we must consider the significance of the sin offerings, for the soul of the servant is said (liii. 10) to be made "an offering for sin." But reserving for the present this point, which will be found by-and-by to introduce no new element into the matter, the following features of the prophecy seem clear.

First of all, there is the endurance of a passion, which is said to be "the chastisement of our peace." "For the transgression of My people was he stricken." The healing of the people is due to his "stripes," and as he receives them the servant "bears their iniquities." Yet this vicarious chastisement is not inflicted upon a passive sufferer, nor does the chapter, taken as a whole, leave the impression that it is the mere infliction of chastisement which turns away the divine anger

against the people, but rather the spiritual and ethical qualities with which the servant meets and undergoes it. To begin with, we must remember that the title, "servant of Jehovah," is of unspeakable spiritual significance; and that its significance, as characterising the spirit of the prophet, is carried into all that he either does or endures. It is evident that the title is selected in order to lay stress upon these spiritual characteristics, and attention is expressly drawn to them in verse 11, where we are told, "By his knowledge shall My *righteous* servant justify many." It is further made clear that nothing else than his unwavering fidelity to his spiritual calling and ministry renders the servant liable to the persecution, suffering, and shame which he endured; and that these were endured in precisely that spirit of uncomplaining, ungrudging consecration and service which exposed him to the possibility of undergoing them. "He was oppressed, yet he humbled himself and opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb; yea, he opened not his mouth" (ver. 7). Thus the infliction of death is met by the sublimest spirit of self-surrender. Does the chapter take no account of this spirit in estimating the worth of the sacrifice? Nothing can be further from the fact. "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." His death, therefore, is not a mere infliction upon him, it is an offering, actively and voluntarily presented by him. In

pouring out his soul unto death he gives the final, consummating, and irrevocable manifestation of that spirit of self-sacrifice which gave him the title he bore. He was numbered with the transgressors, blameless though he was; he was identified with them, shared their condition, their shame, and suffered with them a common death.

But further: if he was identified with them, it was by his own act first. At every stage a boundless compassion led him to appropriate to himself their lot; and he brought to his sufferings a constraining sympathy with the transgressors, which made them a ground of prevalent intercession: "He made intercession for the transgressors." The bearing of their sin, therefore, was not merely the passive submission to the penal consequences of sin; it was the assumption by the sufferer himself of their sin itself with all its consequences, out of overwhelming love and compassion. This is illustrated powerfully by Jonathan Edwards in his *Treatise concerning the Necessity and Reasonableness of the Christian Doctrine of Satisfaction for Sin* (sec. 32): "Christ's great love and pity to the elect was one source of His suffering. A strong exercise of love excites a lively idea of the object loved. And a strong exercise of pity excites a lively idea of the misery under which He pities them. Christ's love, then, brought His elect infinitely near to Him in that grand act of suffering wherein He especially stood for them, and was substituted in their stead; and His love and pity fixed the idea of them in His mind as if He had been really they, and fixed their calamity in His mind as though it really was His. A very strong and lively love and pity towards the miserable tends to make their case ours; as in other respects

so in this in particular, as it doth in our idea place us in their stead, under their misery, with a most lively feeling sense of that misery, as it were feeling it for them actually suffering it in their stead by strong sympathy." Thus, if the Lord makes him a sin offering, the servant takes the sins which he bears upon himself by a voluntary act; if the chastisement of death is inflicted upon him, he responds by "pouring out his soul unto death." And the chapter expressly makes his response, with the fidelity and sympathy which were its motives, the ground of the satisfaction of God in the sacrifice which was made. Wherein lay the necessity of the passion the prophet does not explain; but what it was which made it well-pleasing to God he does make abundantly clear.

Once more. Though the mystical relation between the servant and the people, whose ideal he fulfils, is not referred to in this chapter, we must remember that it is the ground-work of the prophet's thought, and that it has important bearings upon the representative nature of the servant's offering Thus we may conclude that Isaiah liii. utters a consenting voice with the testimonies of our Lord and His apostles as to the spiritual principle of the Atonement.

IV. The Sin Offering

We must now enter upon an investigation into the symbolical teaching of the Hebrew expiatory sacrifices. It is impossible and unnecessary to go fully here into either the history or the details of the Old Testament sacrifices, or to consider the resemblances and contrasts

between them and the sacrifices of Gentile nations. All this would be necessary if the general subject of sacrifice, its rites and usages, the ends sought, or the convictions represented by the whole variety of offerings and ceremonies, were before us. But our field is narrowed in two respects: first, we are simply seeking to find the principle involved in the satisfaction of God for sin; and, secondly, it is only certain of the sacrifices which are stated in the New Testament to have application to our Lord. The prevailing application to Him is of the sin offerings, and this on the ground of the adoption of Isaiah liii. There is also the application by St. Paul of the paschal sacrifice to Him, an application suggested by our Lord's institution of the Eucharist after the celebration of the Passover. Only one other reference remains, namely, that of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who uses the analogy of the Old Testament lustrations to set forth the superior cleansing power of the blood of Christ, as removing spiritual defilement; but this is so abundantly clear of itself, that it needs no further examination. We have therefore to inquire what is the doctrine of satisfaction represented by the sin offerings and the Passover.

But a preliminary caution is necessary. As is pointed out by the late Dr. Robertson Smith in his *Religion of the Semites* (p. 380)—a book which must be studied by those who wish thoroughly to understand the development of the institution of sacrifice, its root ideas, and the similarity between Hebrew and other Semite observances—there is in ancient sacrifices no authoritative interpretation of the ritual; the action is symbolic,

but there is no official declaration of the exact truths symbolised. This may seem surprising at first sight; but any one who will read the Levitical law books through, excluding from his mind what he has been told of their meaning by Christian commentators, who have introduced into them their own doctrine of Atonement as offered by Christ, will find how true it is. There is nothing to prevent, within certain limits, successive interpretations being put upon them by successive generations. Nor is there anything to prevent different members of the community observing them with differing apprehension of their meaning, according to the different theological and ethical presuppositions with which they approached them—as is the case nowadays with the subject of our Lord's Atonement, or, to a certain extent, with the observance of the Lord's Supper.

Hence two conclusions must be borne in mind: First, we cannot always be certain that what seems to us the most natural interpretation was necessarily the interpretation of an ancient worshipper, still less of all the ancient worshippers, for there is a distinctness and a hardness about our notions which was absent from theirs. Secondly, of this we may be sure, that when a prophet like the author of Isaiah liii. sets forth in clear and distinct statements, as we have seen, the elements which went to make up the sin offering of the servant, his statement is of far more importance and trustworthiness for the discovery of the Messianic meaning of the Old Testament sacrifices than any direct investigation of ours into them can possibly be. And this for two reasons. In the first place, as living in the midst of them,

and belonging to the nation which celebrated them, he is the most likely to give us their meaning as it appeared to the most enlightened of his own day; and, in the second place, because the absence of any authoritative exposition of them, and the strikingly independent relationship to them, which we shall find by-and-by to be a characteristic mark of all the prophets, entitled him to read into the sin offerings whatever meaning the Spirit of God might signify to be vital to the atonement of the servant of Jehovah. Therefore, even if the results we gained from a direct study of the sacrifices differed from what we have gained from the study of Isaiah liii., which we shall find not to be the case, our view of the sacrifices would have to give way, and not our interpretation of the prophet, whose language is so clear as to be beyond mistake. Much error on our subject would have been avoided if the theologians of the past had seen that any obscurity rests, not upon the prophets, but upon the law, and had carried back the direct teaching of the prophets to the interpretation of the law, instead of riveting upon the prophets the narrow and sometimes hazardous conclusions they had gained from the law by means of an imperfect critical apparatus and modern juristic conceptions.

Four classes of animal sacrifices are prescribed in the Old Testament: (1) the burnt offering, (2) the peace offering, (3) the sin offering, and (4) the guilt offering (see especially Lev. i.–vii.). But they fall into two kinds, represented specially by the peace offerings and the sin offerings. Leviticus vii. expressly says: "As is the sin offering, so is the guilt offering: there is one law for them." And the only question presenting any diffi-

culty is, to which of the two kinds the burnt offerings belong — a question which it is not necessary here to discuss. The peace offerings set forth and celebrate the existence of normal relations of covenant and communion between God and His people; the sin offerings are intended to re-establish those normal relations where disobedience on the part of men has provoked anger on the part of God. But it is made clear (see Lev. iv.) that the sins atoned for are not those done with a "high hand," but are sins of ignorance. The most important sin offering, that of the great Day of Atonement, was not offered to bring about the reconciliation of individuals to God, nor even directly to reconcile the community. It is to reconcile "the holy place and the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar" (Lev. xvi. 20), Aaron having previously offered a sin offering for himself and for his house (ver. 11). The theory seems to have been that the sins of the community had so infected the priesthood, the holy place, the tabernacle, and the altar, as to disable them from filling their respective parts in the worship of Jehovah. Once a year they need restoring to their normal relations to Him, and the sin of the community which has infected them is symbolically laid upon the scapegoat (Lev. xvi. 22), and sent away into the wilderness. Hence the purpose of the sin offering of the great Day of Atonement is so special, that we must seek the main ideas of the sin offerings from the ordinary examples, simply illustrating them from the yearly atonement.

The general principle, for both the peace offerings and the expiatory offerings, is that "the blood is the life"

(Lev. xvii. 14); but it operates in a different way, according to the distinct objects of the two. The idea of propitiation has fallen into the background in the case of the peace offerings; but in the case of the sin offerings, the matter is different. The normal relations between God and His worshippers having been violated by sin communion has been destroyed, and must be re-established by atonement. Hence there is no sacrificial meal, and the blood of the victim stands to represent a life surrendered under the punitive conditions of God's wrath. Hebrews ix. 22 says: "According to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission." These words must be read in the light of the statement of Leviticus xvii. 11, that "the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement *by reason of the life.*" Here we are distinctly told that the blood is atoning because it is *the life.* And as the blood is further offered to God upon the altar, and sprinkled "before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary" (Lev. iv. 6), it is clear that the point of the whole matter is, not so much that the victim is deprived of life, as that God is presented with the life by what is at once a prescribed but also a voluntary surrender. The atonement consists not solely in the victim losing its life, but in that, by losing it, God gains it; and the emphasis is on the latter rather than on the former. The loss of the life is necessary to its presentation; and its presentation to God satisfies Him for the sin of the offerer, who, by his disobedience has withdrawn his own life from the control of God.

The greatest care is taken in the ritual that this surrender shall be a representative offering. To begin with, the selection of the victims prepares the way for this with special care. It must be remembered as a starting-point that the sense of separation between mankind and brute animals, especially domesticated animals, was by no means felt in extreme antiquity as it is felt by us. An overwhelming mass of proofs of this is familiar to all modern students of the early stages of human society. But, further, the Levitical law prescribed that all sacrificial victims should be domesticated animals, the property of the offerer, the object—as was certain to be the case in a nation of farmers—of his most practical concern, and the fruit of his daily labour; in short, naturally, the victim might almost be called an extension of the offerer's own personality. The laying on of the offerer's hands, which was the first act of the sacrifice, distinctly established this representative character—conveyed to it what Roman Catholics term the offerer's intention,—so that it expressed the sentiments with which the worshipper approached God, and the pouring out of *its* life expressed *his* self-surrender. And this provision that the offerer should, so to speak, himself act through the victim, was finally carried out by the law that the offerer, be he priest or not, should himself slay the victim.

But this solidarity is yet more complete. The victim not only stands as the representative of the offerer, prepared to be, and made by the imposition of hands, an extension of his personality, but one step further must be taken. It must represent him not only as man, but as sinner, in order that its surrender of life may atone for

his sin. In all respects it must stand for the sinful man: so one with him that his condition is its, and its offering is his. Thus, to use the language of Isaiah liii. 6–12, the sin of the offerer must be "laid on" the victim, so that he shall "bear" it. But now what is meant by the bearing of sin? It is often assumed that bearing its *punishment* is intended; but consideration proves this to be a mistake. On the great Day of Atonement the transaction with the scapegoat showed exactly what was meant. There this idea was detached from all others, and made the object of a separate rite. Leviticus xvi. 21, 22 says: "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a man that is in readiness into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a solitary land: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness."

It was not the *punishment* which the goat bare away into the wilderness, for the idea of punishment is not directly associated with the scapegoat. It bears the sin—the whole unfaithfulness of the community, which had defiled the holy places—out from them, so that henceforth they may be pure. It takes therefore the whole body of their sin away, in order that, until the rite needs repetition, the offerers may be pure, and the holy places undefiled. Hence the transference to the victim must be taken to be, not that of the punishment which is due to sin, but of the sin itself which calls for punishment, and of all that the sin entails. Thus the sin offering—in the fullest

sense representing the sinner by receiving the burden of his sin—makes expiation by yielding up and yielding back its life to God, under conditions which represent at once the wrath and the placability of God. Doubtless worldly men were tempted to forget the representative character of the sacrifice, calling upon them to utter through it their penitent self-surrender, and treated the whole as a matter of cheap and easy substitution,—the mere payment of a fine to God. This largely accounts for the attitude towards the sacrifices taken up, as we are about to see, by the prophets. But the more closely we look into the law as it stands, the more we shall see that there is set forth in the sin offering the same spiritual principle of obedience and self-surrender which we have found elsewhere, and that this principle is presented as a spiritual demand upon the worshipper himself.

The application of the Passover to our Lord calls only for a word. So far as the Passover was an atoning sacrifice, all that has been said of the sin offering is applicable to it. But the Passover is the greatest of peace offerings, setting forth the covenant relations in which God stands to His people. It was on the ground of old relations existing, and recalled by the sprinkled blood, rather than of new ones freshly established, that the destroyer passed by the houses of the children of Israel. And thus when Christ is spoken of as our Passover, the thought is rather of His Atonement as already completed, and of the communion which follows upon it: "Wherefore let us keep the feast" (1 Cor. v. 8).

V. The Attitude of the Prophets towards the Sacrifices

It only remains to take a brief glance at the attitude taken up by the prophets towards the whole institution of sacrifice. Taking the greatest names into account, this may be said to be, at its most favourable, one which held all such observances in light estimation, and passed at times even into active denunciation of them. A few leading passages will suffice to set this in clear light. The classical text (1 Sam. xv. 22) strikes the keynote of the whole: "And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Amos strongly says, "Come to Beth-el, and transgress; to Gilgal, and multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes every three days" (Amos iv. 4); and, "Though ye offer Me your burnt offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept them" (v. 22). The whole context of the book shows that he was condemning, not the *place* at which the sacrifices were offered, but the spirit of reliance upon them, instead of on the fulfilment of his own ethical ideal. The great passage in Isaiah's opening indictment of Judah, in which he denounces the thoughtless and unethical ceremonialism of his time, is too familiar to need quotation. But even allowing for the vehemence called forth by so immoral a spectacle, the statement, "I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats" (Isa. i. 11), approaches

the laying down of an absolute principle. The way of escape for the people is that they "cease to do evil: learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (i. 17). Micah, in his report of Balaam's answer to Balak's inquiry whether he shall come before the Lord with sacrifices, makes Balaam take up this common prophetic position in his reply, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah vi. 8.)

Jeremiah is not content with merely upholding an ethical ideal and disparaging a recourse to sacrifices in comparison with it, but he makes a statement which has given rise to much discussion among historical critics, though its precise import in this respect is outside our present concern. He says: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Add your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat ye flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: but this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people: and walk ye in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you" (Jer. vii. 21–23).

And what is declared by the prophets is echoed in the Psalms by seekers after God, who desire to find some ground of acceptance with Him. We have already considered the use of Psalm xl. 6–8 in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire. . . . Then said I, Lo, I come to do Thy will." Psalm li. 16, 17

gives the same sentiment from the mouth of the penitent stricken with consciousness of his sin: "For Thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou hast no pleasure in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

It is needless to discuss here with any fulness the large subject which these texts open out. They contain strong statements, so strong that it would be equally foolish as uncandid to attempt to soften them or to gloss them over. Undoubtedly some explanation may be found in the easy-going substitutionary view of sacrifice to which allusion has already been made; but such an explanation does not altogether meet the case. The principles announced are so positive, that they tend to make the sacrifices, even if offered in the highest spirit, unnecessary adjuncts to an ethical temper which is able to express itself adequately to God without their help. It does not follow that this was altogether the case, even in regard to such sacrifices as the prophets knew of, much less with regard to such a sacrifice as Isaiah liii. foretells. Looked at from the divine standpoint, both the sacrificial system and the ethical protest of the prophets have proceeded from one common inspiration; looked at from the human standpoint, both have been elaborated to satisfy the different spiritual needs of distinct types of mind and of different generations. Putting the prophetic utterances on the subject side by side with the Levitical legislation, we are forced to recognise both the breadth and diversity of divine inspiration, and the inability of even inspired minds to grasp the whole. Nor is inspiration so narrow and

cramping an influence as to restrain those who come under it from giving full expression to the side of truth they apprehend, totally without regard to those considerations of safety which commend themselves to cautious and timid men. It is the humanity of this teaching which enables us best to appreciate its divinity, while destroying the possibility of our idly resting in mere words spoken in the past, without seeking for ourselves from the same Spirit who inspired the prophets, and yet left to them such latitude of individual liberty, the means of combining the elements of truth in two supplementary sets of utterances. God, we are told in the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 1), spake "unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners." For the prophets who have been quoted the outlook of Isaiah liii. had not come above the horizon, still less that Trinitarian apprehension of God, in its fulness, and of the constitution of humanity in the Son of God, which, as we shall see later on, gives a *rationale* to the whole doctrine of Atonement far higher than is disclosed even in Isaiah liii.

In the light of those later revelations of truth, the earlier and typical sacrifices have a justification which, without that light, the very loftiness of the ethical spirit of the prophets incapacitated them for seeing. For us at present, it is sufficient that, even under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, they gave the highest deliverance of the ethical consciousness open to them in their time, and that their protest must take equal rank as a part of divine revelation with the divine institution of sacrifice, of which they speak with but slight respect. Thus their great message to us, from God Himself, is that

all satisfaction made to God must be spiritual, ethical, individual, and rendered in the due discharge, by righteousness, of the obligations to God and to men which the network of ordinary human relationship to both imposes. Isaiah liii. satisfies these conditions; so, even more fully, do St. Paul's epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews. The latter seize upon these utterances of prophet and penitent, and make them the groundwork, with their fuller light, of a doctrine of Atonement which, in presence of the Incarnation and the cross, harmonizes while transcending the opposing Old Testament views. Above all, our Lord Himself, in His relation to both the race and the individual, presents in His Atonement, and in the conditions of justification which rest upon it, a satisfaction, as we shall see, which stands in as direct a relation to the ethical spirit of the prophets as to the institution of Levitical sacrifice which foreshadowed it.

To sum up. The testimony of the prophets and the psalmists demands that the principle of the Atonement shall be truly spiritual, and shall stand in vital relation to the spiritual and ethical condition of those for whom it is effected. Suffering unconnected with conduct, even though the sufferer be divine, vicarious sacrifice, if unrelated to the spiritual life of those for whom it is offered, would be out of harmony with all the principles which they have laid down. But it is not so. The consensus of both Testaments is that the satisfying principle in our Lord's death was none other than His complete surrender and obedience to His Father in manifesting His own life as the Son throughout His earthly life,—but especially in death,—under the penal conditions prescribed

for Him by His Incarnation and consequent union with the race of sinful men. And, further, this Atonement, complete in itself and vicarious though it is, stands in such a mystical relation to the experience of believers as makes it to promote, and not to supersede, all those ethical interests which prophets and psalmists stood forward to assert and to protect.

CHAPTER IV

SOME THEOLOGICAL ACCOUNTS OF THE ATONEMENT

THE preceding chapter has sufficiently shown that the Scriptures have a definite doctrine as to what our Lord did in order to atone for sin, and also as to that in respect of which His Atonement was availing. It is evident that, in addition, they also contain a wealth of revelation as to the relationships between God and man, in the light of which the Atonement must be understood. Their doctrine, however, is not reflective, but immediate—attained by a direct intuition, realised by a spiritual experience, announced with a divine authority, which are the universal characteristics of revelation. But something more than this is needed as time goes on. As men come to reflect upon this great subject, they are compelled to ask what there is in the original relationships between God and man, and in the modification of those relationships brought about by sin, which necessitates or brings about the Atonement, and determines the features it assumed in the death of Christ. The general facts of our relationships to God, of the violation of them by sin, and that the remedy for that violation is found in the death of Christ, being accepted, it becomes necessary to bring all these together before the mind, to seek the grounds of the great work of Atonement, and to endeavour at once to

understand its nature in and through its grounds, and its grounds in and through its nature. That such inquiries are inevitable is not due to mere philosophical interests, to the desire to grasp the matter as an intelligible whole, but is of the greatest practical importance, as throwing light upon the character of God, upon the nature and condition of mankind, and upon the purpose of God towards men. The Scriptures do not directly supply this want for the reason just stated, that they contain an immediate revelation, and not a constructive theory. Theorising, necessary as it is in its place, comes second to realising; and with the New Testament writers the realisation was so vivid that there was no immediate place or need for theorising. But they furnish the material out of which a satisfying answer may be found. To find this answer is the object of dogmatic theology.

It is natural that there should not be unanimity as to this answer at present. There is an obvious contrast between the practical unanimity of the Church in regard to the doctrine of the Person of Christ—at any rate, upon the most important questions—and the absence of it in regard to the Atonement. And as this is felt, the first explanation offered of the difference will probably be that the Church never gave its united attention to the one doctrine as it did to the other. And perhaps it will be added that this was because the practical importance of the doctrine of the Person of Christ is greater than that of the Atonement. But though there is considerable truth in this answer, it carries us only a little way. Without discussing how far the decisions of the four great Councils as to the Person of Christ can be

regarded as complete and final, it may be safely affirmed that the general conditions of theological thought were as unripe for the settlement of the one question as they were ripe for the settlement of the other.

The difficulties in the way of a solution in the case of the doctrine of the Atonement are at least threefold—exegetical, theological, and spiritual; and due effect must be given to each of these.

1. The exegetical difficulty can be easily seen. Superficially, the doctrine of the Atonement depends upon the accurate rendering of the sense of Holy Scripture upon the subject (assuming, of course, for the present that a consistent body of teaching is furnished by the different writers). But such a work of exegesis is indeed difficult. Leaving on one side the interpretation of passages as a whole, there is the much harder task of discovering the full and exact meaning of the terms which were used, and of the rites and ceremonies which were observed. Such an inquiry demands not only patient investigation, but, above all, the sympathetic insight of a strong and well-informed historical imagination. The absence of the latter will not only prevent the terms and observances from giving up their true, full, and original meaning, but will insure the grafting upon the earlier teaching of the current ideas and the familiar associations of the later times to which the expositor belongs; may probably, indeed, where the institutions under which men live have become essentially dissimilar, lead to the improper carrying over without hesitation of principles and procedure recognised in the one to the totally unsuitable conditions of the other. It is difficult to avoid such transference, even when we are

on our guard against it. But without such precaution, and the knowledge necessary for its observance, this is certain to take place, with the result that old terms and usages speak to us with modern, and not with ancient, speech.

When this happens, in addition to misunderstandings and the misapplication of alien principles and associations, an impoverishment of thought inevitably takes place. And for this reason. The progress of thought is by means of specialisation, articulation, and crystallization; and its results are preserved with ever more precise definition of language, which stereotypes terms in making them exact. It is just here that constant watchfulness is necessary. Ancient thought, speech, and usage were often comprehensive, even when and by reason of being inexact. And room must be found to comprehend in thought all those elements which become separated by analysis, definition, and restriction of speech. Too often some of them are dropped by the way, and then there is of necessity a misapprehension and distortion of what was originally meant.

But, once more, exegesis requires a true sense of proportion and a grasp of the principle of development in the teaching which it interprets. Each part must be read in the light of the whole, must have its proper relation to the whole, and its proper place, neither more nor less, in the progressive manifestation of the whole. This is the last achievement of exegesis, and in order thereto qualifications are required which belong to a higher sphere than that of mere interpretation. It was impossible for all these requirements to be met and their difficulties to

be overcome when Hebrew teacher was interpreted by Greek philosopher or Latin schoolman, prophet and priest by jurist, ancient seer by modern theologian, with little or no historical and critical sense or apparatus. And many of the most erratic explanations of the Atonement are due primarily to the misunderstandings, incongruities, and faults of proportion of such unequipped and faulty exegesis.

2. The theological difficulties in the way of a satisfactory theory of the Atonement have been equally serious. Its attainment depends upon the perfecting of many other inquiries of theological thought. First and foremost of these is the doctrine of the Person of Christ, and of the relation of Christ to God. But this subject, to which the highest interests and the united efforts of the Church were devoted during the fourth century, is only one of those which bear upon the Atonement. The relationship of God and that of Christ to men; the questions which concern the spiritual nature of man in itself and in its relations to God; sin—its nature and its consequences; salvation—its meaning and its method;—all these supply material which is indispensable, as we shall see more clearly in the course of this inquiry, to a complete and final doctrine of the Atonement; and whatever may be said as to the finality and completeness of the results reached in regard to the purely Christological questions, it is evident that no general agreement was attained as to the rest. The Greek theologians, who represented the highest speculative and constructive thought of the early Church, had less genius for handling the anthropological questions than for the theological and Christological. They had also less assistance from philosophy, and no such necessity of facing these

subjects was laid upon them by the controversies of their time. The noblest Greek thought had spent itself upon the relationship of God to the world; the Oriental religions with which Christianity came in contact were exercised by the same subject; and therefore the Christian faith in the Divinity and Lordship of Christ, and in His revelation of God, was both forced to define itself in relation to pagan philosophic and religious thought, and was supplied with the means of expressing itself in terms of the philosophy from which it yet more or less differentiated itself. But no such controversial or apologetic necessity arose as to the anthropological questions, and no such help was available.

Still less in the case of the doctrine of the Atonement. To mention only partially the reasons for this: the absence of any worthy idea of the personality of God, of any sense of His holiness, and of any consciousness of sin, kept pagan Greeks from either supplying or seeking any doctrine of the Atonement worth calling such; and these defects were not altogether without hurtful influence upon Greek Christian theology, notwithstanding its conspicuous merits. Thus it came to pass that the great Greek theologians, who shaped the ecclesiastical doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation, were neither called nor prepared to devote their strength either to the doctrine of the Atonement or to those other doctrines which stand in so close a connexion with it that it can only be fashioned in their light. The theology of Latin Christianity and of the Reformation brought these latter questions into prominence, and with every approach to their solution a satisfactory explanation of the Atonement is made more practicable.

There is another side, of course, to be recognised The Atonement itself sheds light upon all the relationships and all the divine and human facts with which it is bound up. And thus the illumination is reciprocal. But it remains true that the explanation of the Atonement cannot advance beyond the understanding of the facts and the factors which make it what it is, and that, in order to a final synthesis, these must be determined first. Thus, so long as the investigation of the many elements which affect the subject is incomplete, or leads to divergent answers, it cannot be otherwise than that the explanation of the Atonement should reflect both the incompleteness and the divergence.

3. But above all, the full apprehension of the revelation of God in Christ is necessary to explain the Atonement. The master key to correct exegesis and to satisfactory theology is the complete spiritual apprehension of that revelation. Such apprehension means more than credence given to it and reliance upon it. It means the insight which shapes all thoughts of God and man, both in themselves and in their mutual relations, in accordance therewith, giving full effect to every part and excluding all foreign elements. And this is only gradually being brought to pass, in spite of many delays and obstacles. When the apostles passed away, and the Church came under the dominant influence of men whose minds had been formed under Greek and Latin influences, the difficulty of such apprehension was greatly increased. Alien influences damaged the higher consciousness of the Church even more, perhaps, than its practical piety. Who that reads the theological records of the past can

help seeing how imperfectly they are in accordance with the Spirit of God's Son in our hearts, "crying, Abba, Father"? How imperfectly Christian has been the apprehension of the revelation given in Christ of the character of God and of His relations towards men! How imperfect has been the response to the revelation, due not only to the lukewarmness and perversity of sinful hearts, but to their lack of knowledge and discernment! Yet all such imperfections, pertaining to that region where intellectual enlightenment, moral discrimination, and spiritual experience meet and affect one another, have a direct effect upon the doctrine of the Atonement, which, as explaining God's supreme demand, gift, and action in presence of human sin, needs fulness of sympathetic insight into the mind of God, so far as the knowledge of it is vouchsafed to man, based upon acquaintance with His character and His relations towards sinful men. Here, as elsewhere, it is true that *pectus est quod facit theologum.* A comprehensive and painstaking intellect is insufficient. Mental defects are harmful, but still more faults of heart. Yet until the truth of Christ has by a living experience pervaded every faculty, and brought at last the intellect of man into full accordance with itself, agreement in a complete doctrine of the Atonement is impossible.

Thus, from whatever side the subject of salvation may be approached, it is so vast, has so many aspects, and raises so many problems of the profoundest kind, that, the human mind being what it is, present unanimity could only be purchased at the cost of general shallowness. Ultimate unanimity can, if ever, only be attained as the result of a thoroughness and honesty of

thought, which must inevitably produce, to begin with, manifold onesidedness and those controversies—the outcome of onesidedness—which, while apparently the cause of division, in reality tend to bring about that comprehensive insight out of which completed unity must spring.

But for strictly theological purposes it is just this diversity, caused by the singling out and emphasizing of particular aspects of the truth, which has the greatest value. For, speaking generally, it may be confidently laid down, that every one of these accounts corresponds to a real element of the whole truth, and that any essential falsity in it arises, not from what it includes, but from what it excludes; in short, from the various evils which necessarily result from treating a part as the whole. In this case such exaggeration and consequent exclusion not only affect the completeness of the account of the Atonement, but react unfavourably upon, and stereotype, the general conceptions of God and man (in themselves and in their mutual relations), out of the incompleteness of which these partial accounts arise.

But while such incomplete accounts are, of necessity, more or less injurious to those whose views are limited by them, they are of the greatest service to the theologian. For they emphasize the existence and display the working of spiritual forces and principles which, but for such exaggerations, would be overlooked. And to overlook in such a matter as this is not only to omit something essential to a true comprehension of the subject, but to damage the remainder which is taken account of, by depriving it of the modifying influences which these neglected considera-

tions would properly have exerted. Hence the limitations of men's minds being what they are, it is well for the truth that its several aspects should be emphasized even at the cost of partial and exaggerated statements, so long as the catholic temper gradually prevails and leads men, in the fullest exercise of a criticism which is sympathetic and of a sympathy which is critical, to select what is true in each of the seemingly divergent and even incompatible accounts, with a view to combination in a whole which does justice to every part. Such a combination, when it takes place, will not be brought about by artificial means, nor will it be a patchwork of truths held in merely mechanical conjunction. It will be the natural result of a spiritual insight which has transcended the old oppositions, and which, just because it has transcended them, is able to apprehend and give expression to each element of truth in them, while uniting all in a harmonious and organic unity.

If these considerations be true, they mark out for us the lines, and dictate the spirit, of our present inquiry. It will be well to select for careful examination those distinctive accounts of the Atonement which are most influential at the present day, either because they supply the underlying principles of more modern statements, as is the case, for example, with the *Cur Deus Homo?* of Anselm, or because, in our times, they are widely held as they stand. We must limit ourselves to the final or most representative form in which such views are set forth, and, in the case of recent writers, must bestow the largest amount of attention on those who have exerted the greatest influence upon religious thought in the English-

speaking world. For information as to the general course of thought on the subject, as to views which may now be treated as theological curiosities (*e.g.* the doctrine of payment to the devil), and as to minor varieties, the reader must be referred to the Appendix. Of course such a selection as is here made is always open to the charge of being more or less subjective and arbitrary. Care should be taken to give as little ground for this objection as possible. But even when such a mistake is not altogether avoided, it may probably be more mischievous from the historical than from the dogmatic point of view. For, at least, the selection made gives the key to the elements out of which, or in respect to which, the writer's own view has been developed, and therefore reveals the world of thought upon the subject in which he has lived. And this is useful in calling attention both to what he has taken account of and to what he has omitted in his treatment.

In this chapter the following will be criticised for the reasons just stated. Anselm, whose *Cur Deus Homo?* has largely moulded Western thought; the account of the redemptive functions of the active and passive righteousness of Christ given by many Calvinist theologians; the governmental explanation of Grotius; the view of satisfaction by self-surrender set forth by Dr. M'Leod Campbell and by F. D. Maurice; the writings of Bushnell, Dr. Dale, and Dr. Westcott upon the subject; and, lastly, the view of Ritschl, whose great influence in Germany is beginning to extend to this country. The consideration of the purely negative opposition of the Socinians to the generally received views will be postponed to the next chapter, because of necessity

it yields no positive constructive principle by which the Atonement may be understood.

The spirit in which our inquiry is pursued will be the candid desire to appreciate and make use of the light which is thrown upon the subject by each writer, even in cases where our criticism may force us to regard the general drift of the teaching as unsatisfactory.

Anselm

The first account to be examined is that of Anselm, in the *Cur Deus Homo?* A general outline of this treatise is given in the Appendix. Our object here is simply to discuss its salient features. The immense service rendered by Anselm was, that by his work he sealed the doom of the hitherto preponderant view, that our Lord's death was a compensation to the devil for the redemption of mankind. He secured the general recognition, once for all, of the God-ward significance of the Atonement, and he made the first serious attempt to establish in controversy its nature, as a satisfaction offered to God on account of sin. Anselm interprets the whole matter by means of the familiar analogies of mediæval sovereignty. God, as the divine monarch, is the supreme possessor of sovereign and personal rights. He claims, as His due, the honour which consists in the subjection of the entire will of all rational creatures to His will. Sin is the withdrawal of this honour, the withholding of what is due; and it involves, in addition to defrauding God of what is rightfully His, the offer of an insult (*contumelia*) to Him. Sin can only be forgiven when full satisfaction has been made to God for the dishonour which has been done to Him. And satisfac-

tion consists not merely in the full payment of what has been withheld, but in an increased payment as compensation for the insult offered by the withholding. This is illustrated by examples taken from human affairs, and the principle of these is applied to God. Such a satisfaction cannot possibly be made by man, for, as a creature, he already owes everything to God, and has received everything from God. Hence it could only be paid by One who is both divine and human, namely, our Lord, who, by enduring, though sinless, death, which is the penalty of sin, offers to God something which is not due from Him, and is recompensed by being empowered to grant salvation to mankind.

Such is a general account of the Atonement as it is set forth by Anselm. It supplies the basis for the language often used, that the death of Christ is a satisfaction on account of sin made to the injured majesty of God.

But what was the motive for conferring salvation on sinners at so great a cost? According to Anselm, it is the necessity that God "should perfect concerning human nature what He has begun" (ii. 4), otherwise His work in the creation of a nature, fitted for so great a destiny as man's, will have been in vain. It is objected by Boso, with whom the dialogue of the treatise is carried on, that in that case God acts in His own interests rather than in ours, for He is concerned in avoiding what would be unbecoming to Himself rather than in averting evil from us. The answer of Anselm is, first, that throughout God acts in the matter without compulsion; and, secondly, that God in creating man foresaw what he would do, and

notwithstanding, by creating him, freely took upon Himself the obligation to perfect what He had begun. Hence the conclusion is finally stated, "that it is necessary that the goodness of God should, on account of its immutability, perfect concerning man what He has begun, although the whole of the good which He does is by grace" (ii. 5).

It is evident how greatly Anselm is hampered, at every point, by his unsatisfactory conceptions of the relationship between God and man. The analogy of a monarch and his subjects must in any case be seriously inadequate to represent this relationship, but most of all that of a mediæval monarch. The dominance of this conception at once introduces offensive elements into the matter, and impairs the force of those profounder considerations which Anselm endeavours to set forth. God is represented, so far as the analogy goes, as enforcing an absolute, but also a strictly personal claim; indeed, on the face of it, the most immediately personal that can be conceived, for a reparation to insulted majesty has to do with affronted feelings of personal dignity, which are a peculiarly individual concern.

In the first place, this conception makes it impossible to do justice to the love of God, as the motive of redemption. The reader closes the treatise with the feeling that the stupendous condescension of the Incarnation and the cross is so explained as to stir no sense of wondering gratitude towards God as the author of salvation, but that the effect upon him of the grace manifested by the Redeemer is seriously lessened by the hard spirit of exaction which demands it, and of exaction made all the harsher because the end to be attained

appears a strictly personal one. It is true that, as will shortly appear, this impression is not altogether just, but it is certainly made. As we have seen, Anselm himself, to some extent, foresees the effect of his exposition, and seeks to counteract it, but with only imperfect success. God will not stultify Himself, we are told, by commencing a work which He will not at all costs carry through. At first sight this persistency appears to be for His own sake. But Anselm's reply is, that the goodness of God consists in His proceeding to create, when He foresaw that His creature would sin, and that this sin would necessitate the Atonement if the divine purpose were to be carried through. There is undoubtedly here the material for an adequate account. The very purpose for which man was created is, as Anselm explains (ii. 1), that he may choose and enjoy the chief good, which is God Himself. Creation was therefore an act proceeding from the divine love, and still more so when it involved redemption at so great a cost. But the relationships of maker and monarch are insufficient to convey a worthy impression of this love. Creatorship, as explained by Anselm, is too external a bond to account for the wealth of divine love which the gospel records; and the result is, that instead of the yearnings of the Father's heart, and the Father's unfailing purpose to bestow all goodness, at all costs, upon those whom He has created to be His sons, being set before us as the motives of redemption, the stress is laid upon qualities of persistence and readiness to bear heavy cost, which are simply the characteristic marks of all who undertake great enterprises, and are therefore found pre-eminently in God. Doubtless there may

be generosity and magnanimity in the inception of all *quasi* creative enterprises, and the prevision of suffering in carrying them out. And this is peculiarly so in the case of creation. But the persistence, however generous, of one who will not endure the discredit of failure is no fitting key to the motives of the Father and Redeemer of mankind.

In the next place, the atoning satisfaction is represented as the enforcement of a personal claim, the vindication of personal honour from the insult offered to it by sin, which consists of the insubordination of the human will to the will of God. The prominence given to the subjection of the creaturely will to the Creator is characteristically in keeping with Anselm's ruling idea of God as sovereign and of man as subject. Will regnant in God—will subject in man; this is the conception of the religious relation which is in the forefront. God makes Himself felt by uttering His command; man draws near to Him in submission. It is true that the goodness which prompts the command, and the blessedness which follows on the submission, are present to Anselm's mind, for he dwells upon the enjoyment of God as the end for which man was created; yet a satisfactory view of the approach of God to the spirit of man, and of the spiritual response which makes the submission not slavish subjection, but harmony of mind and will, is absent. It follows that God, being concerned as sovereign to secure the triumph of His will, the great difficulty in the way of forgiveness, when sin enters, is the protection of God's honour. And this inevitably suggests the objection: Would not a higher spirit have enabled God to waive such satisfaction, and

have been, by virtue of its love and magnanimity, a more effectual safeguard for His honour, in everything save a mathematical sense? An answer to this is to be found in Anselm, which strikes an altogether profounder note. The will of God is cleared from any charge of being arbitrary, by the declaration that God is only free to will what is expedient and becoming.[1] Further, it is explained that to forgive sin out of simple compassion, without any payment of the honour which has been carried away, is simply not to punish it. "And since rightly to order sin without satisfaction is nothing else than to punish it, if it is not punished, it is dismissed unordered (*inordinatum*). And as it does not become God to allow anything in His kingdom to be unordered, it does not become Him to leave sin unpunished. Moreover, if this were so, the sinner and the sinless would be treated alike, and this is not becoming to God."[2] These two considerations are of the greatest importance. They show that in the utterance and enforcement of His will, God is upholding supreme moral interests, and not merely magnifying His authority and power as such. But they carry us into a region to which Anselm's analogy of mediæval sovereignty, with its quick resentment of affronts to personal majesty, is a most untrustworthy guide.

Again, the Son of God is represented as literally a *deus ex machinâ* in the work of redemption. It is satisfactorily proved that sinners can offer no satisfaction to God. Equally satisfactory is the demonstration that none other save God incarnate can fulfil the requirements of such a satisfaction as is demanded. For this great service

[1] *Cur Deus Homo?* lib. i. 12. [2] *Ibid.*, lib. i. 12.

the Son of God is available, and is the most suitable Person of the Holy Trinity. So the matter is presented to us; yet no light is forthcoming as to the relationship of the Son of God to mankind, such as, for example, is found in Athanasius,[1] and even the reasons which made the Son the divine Person most fitted to become incarnate are but feebly set forth. On this side of the subject Anselm displays the distinctive weakness of Latin theology —its inability to do justice to the more mystical aspects of the relations between God and man.

5. Moreover, the conception of satisfaction upon which this account rests excludes all ethical qualities from the Atonement. It does so because it is laid down that satisfaction must be made by the payment to God of something which is not due to Him.[2] And this is found in the death of Christ, who, because He is divine, is under no necessity of dying, and because He is sinless does not owe death as the penalty of sin. His obedience, His maintenance of righteousness, He does owe; and therefore, not only is atoning value altogether denied to our Lord's righteousness in fulfilling the divine law, but the spirit in which He offered Himself to God in death is left out of consideration.

Lastly, Anselm's account destroys the spiritual influence of the death of Christ upon mankind. The way in which it meets the otherwise insuperable difficulty of forgiveness is so mechanical, and, as we have just seen, so great a gulf is set between Him and us in His offering of it, that the sense of solidarity between Him and those whom He represents is well-nigh destroyed. It is almost, if not altogether, impossible to realise through the form

[1] See Appendix, p. 453.

[2] *Cur Deus Homo?* lib. ii. 12.

in which Anselm represents it, that Christ's death is in such wise ours that we can enter into it. And, in addition to this, the inspiring motive of gratitude to Him, the constraining love of Christ, is crippled by the explanation, already considered, of the motive which urged God to redeem us, and Christ to meet the difficulty which existed. The charge made by Bushnell,[1] that on the view of Anselm no moral dynamic is left to the cross, appears to be justified.

To sum up, the *Cur Deus Homo?* has rendered most noteworthy service to the truth, by vindicating the Godward significance of the Atonement, by laying down the principle that God must perfect that which He has begun, by emphasizing the necessity of ordering sin, and by demonstrating that the sinner can make no such satisfaction to God as would enable the forgiveness of sins to take place, without weakening the sense of the heinousness of sin. But Anselm's conception of the relationship of God to men is not only inadequate in itself, but because so, affords no fitting basis for the Atonement; the narrowly personal interests, which this conception suggests, if it does not altogether necessitate, impair the effect of the more awful elements of the truth, while they weaken the force of divine mercy, and, in consequence, the response of grateful and penitent trust.

The Calvinist Doctrine of the Active and Passive Obedience of Christ

With Anselm ends the chief interest of Roman theology on our subject. Succeeding teachers built upon his

[1] *Vicarious Sacrifice*, Preface.

foundation, though with minor peculiarities of their own. One great question, however, divided opinion; namely, that of the absolute necessity and the intrinsic value of the Atonement. Duns Scotus and his followers, influenced by an extreme Nominalist philosophy, attributed all moral distinctions to the will of God. In consequence, sin had exactly that degree of heinousness which God was pleased to attach to it. And if the death of Christ was a sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the world, it was simply because God *willed* to accept it as such. On the other side, Thomas Aquinas insisted on the inherent necessity that satisfaction should be made, and on the intrinsic value of our Lord's death, as, according to his view, a "superabundant satisfaction."[1] But although the Scotists denied the *necessity* of satisfaction, which is the cornerstone of Anselm's account, yet their general conception of the Atonement was derived from his. The creed of the Roman Church was finally declared by the Council of Trent, which decreed that Christ "made satisfaction for us to God the Father."[2]

But the course of thought was very different among the Reformed Churches. Here the Atonement and the relation of the believer to it shared with the doctrine of the Person of Christ and with the question of the extent of redemption the greatest attention of theologians. And the most striking result was the elaboration of the doctrine of the active and passive righteousness of Christ, which we must now examine. The *Formula Concordiæ*, a Lutheran symbol, thus expresses it: "Since Christ was not only man, but God and man in one undivided person, He was not

[1] See Appendix, p. 457.

[2] *Conc. Trid. Sess.*, vi., cap. 7.

subject to the law, just as He was not liable to suffering and death (by reason of His person), because He was Lord of the law. On that account His obedience (not that only which He rendered to the Father in the whole of His suffering and death, but also that by which, for our sake, He subjected Himself voluntarily to the law and fulfilled it) is imputed to us for righteousness; so that God, on account of that whole obedience which Christ, by doing and suffering in His life and death, offered on our account to His heavenly Father, forgives our sins, counts us as good and just, and bestows upon us eternal salvation."

In these words there is no statement that the active and passive righteousness of Christ had separate functions to discharge in the work of salvation. But it was in this way that this account was developed.[1] Sin renders mankind guilty before God, and liable to punishment commensurate with the greatness of the offence. The first necessity therefore is that we should receive a sentence of acquittal, releasing us from guilt, and securing us against punishment. This is obtained by the passive obedience of Christ; that is, by His voluntary endurance in death of the penalty due to the sin, which is forgiven. But this

[1] It must not be supposed that all the Calvinistic theologians treated the subject in the way which is criticised in the text. The Appendix shows that the development was gradual, and was never universally entertained. But the Reformers insisted upon the redemptive significance of the active obedience of Christ, on the ground of statements in Scripture and of a practical feeling that such obedience must be well-pleasing to God, before their conception of satisfaction had been enlarged and transformed to receive the new elements thus introduced. In consequence, the elaboration of the account inevitably led to the separation of the active from the passive righteousness of Christ, and to the assigning to the former of a function outside the satisfaction. Short of this development, the introduction of the active righteousness was a disturbing influence rather than otherwise.

acquittal only meets what may be called the negative side of the case. If we are to be brought into the favour and fellowship of God something more is required. We must be accounted righteous before Him; and, as we have no righteousness of our own, this can be brought about only by the imputation to us of Christ's active obedience, that righteousness of complete fulfilment of the law and will of God which He undertook to render on our account and not His own. The passive obedience is, strictly speaking, Christ's *satisfaction*; the active is His *merit*.[1]

When we inquire as to the reason which necessitated the sufferings and death of Christ in order to our acquittal, the prevailing answer of the Protestant writers is, that the retributive justice of God is obliged to visit sin with adequate punishment, and that, if sinners are to be spared, it can only be because that adequate punishment is inflicted on One who is both able and willing to take their place and to bear the full weight of their punishment. This insistence on the demands of justice, which God, by His character and sovereignty, is under a moral necessity to maintain, strikes a deeper note than the conception of Anselm, or, at least, than its more prominent and superficial side, though references to the majesty and honour of God occur, which remind us of the language of Anselm. Indeed, this view is made prominent in later times by President Edwards, who, after insisting on the intrinsic necessity of an infinite punishment of sin, goes on to add, that "the majesty of God requires this vindication. It cannot be properly

[1] *Vide* President Edwards, *History of Redemption*, part ii., sec. i.; *Works*, vol. v., p. 141. London, 1817.

vindicated without it, neither can God be just to *Himself* without this vindication."[1]

There are several features of this account which claim our sympathy. To begin with, the choice of the word obedience to designate the sufferings and death of our Lord shows that the spiritual and ethical elements of the Atonement were not altogether without influence upon the minds of those who selected it, although scant justice was done to these elements by their doctrine as a whole. In the view of the Reformed theologians the obedience lay in our Lord's undertaking, with the Father, to endure the punishment requisite to procure the acquittal of the elect, under the terms of the covenant entered into between the Father and the Son, and in His actually surrendering Himself to the penalties which He had undertaken to endure. This spirit in our Lord was hardly taken into account in determining the value of the Atonement, except in so far as that had our Lord been unwilling to submit Himself to the Passion on our behalf, it would have been impossible to have inflicted it upon Him, and, even if possible, would have been unjust. The justice of our Lord's sacrifice of Himself being accepted in substitution for the punishment of the elect lay, according to all these writers, in His own willingness to accept the awful position which He alone could fill. But once He was willing, the validity of the satisfaction was estimated by the nature and the degree of His sufferings, and not by the spirit in which He entered into them and bore

[1] President Edwards *Concerning the Necessity and Reasonableness of the Christian Doctrine of Satisfaction for Sin.—Works*, vol. viii., p. 463. London, 1817.

them. Yet, notwithstanding this, the thought of our Lord's spiritual attitude kept knocking at the door of men's minds through this word obedience; and the remembrance of this communion of loving purpose between the Father and the Son, ratified in the covenant of redemption, lifted their minds to a higher realm of thought and feeling than their penal doctrine alone would have made possible, and did something—nay, much—to soften its repulsive features.

In the next place, this account is remarkable for its attempt to find redemptive power in the life of our Lord. For Anselm it had no such value. Our Lord's "active" obedience was of merely private significance, because it was something which He Himself owed to God. But while Anselm laid stress on the humanity which made obedience a duty, the Reformed theologians laid stress on the Divinity, which, as they held, made the obedience of Christ an act of voluntary condescension. This being so, there could be no doubt but that His condescension was on our account, and the question arose as to its bearing on the work of our salvation. The declaration of the Epistle to the Romans, "by the obedience of one many were made righteous," supplied the material for an answer. Limiting the interpretation of the word obedience to the active righteousness of Christ, these theologians understood the text to mean that His righteousness was imputed to us as the ground of our justification. The interpretation of the text was unsatisfactory, and their view that our Lord's Divinity exempted Him, on becoming incarnate, from any obligation to fulfil the law on His own account, was unsatisfactory, and showed a total misconception of the Incarnation. But the con-

viction that our Lord's life as well as His death has a more intimate relation to our salvation than the setting of a perfect example was the resurrection of a truth which for a long time had been obscured.

Not only so, this account was an attempt, inspired by the truest spirit of Christian devotion, to do justice in the dogmatic sphere to the sense of living union with and dependence upon Christ. It was the weakness of Anselm's view that it did nothing to satisfy this, the most vital experience of saving faith. The recompense won by our Lord's submission to death, He assigns, according to Anselm, to the sinners whose cause He had espoused. But there is nothing to show that the gift is not external to our Lord, or that it cannot, after it has been received, be held in independence of Him. And the magical view of sacramental efficacy held by the mediæval Church tended practically to cause the blessings of salvation to be looked upon as special gifts, conferred upon us indeed through Christ, but held independently of conscious fellowship with Him. But with the new vividness of the Protestant experience that Christ is the only and sufficient ground of our access to God, and with the new sense that faith brings men into a living and lasting relationship with Him, by reason of which alone are we accounted righteous before God, came the need to give this deepest conviction of the heart dogmatic expression. And the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's active righteousness, or obedience, to believers is the result.

And, lastly, in this account prominence is given to the distinction, sound in itself, though faultily conceived, between the two elements which are united in the work of

our Lord, each having a necessity of its own in the accomplishment of Atonement, the elements of obedience, shown in doing the will of God, and the endurance of suffering and death, brought about as a consequence of that obedience, and submitted to in its spirit.

But while all this is true, the distinction between the active and passive obedience of Christ, as carried out, is untenable, and still more so is the explanation of the particular effect of each of them on the work of salvation.

In the first place, no such distinction is drawn in the New Testament. The reference to the "obedience of the one man" in Romans v. 19 evidently covers the whole work of Atonement, unless the passage is defective and misleading, while the tenth and eleventh verses attribute our justification to the blood of Christ, our reconciliation to God to the death of His Son.

In the next place, the division of our Lord's obedience into two parts is psychologically and historically impossible. In all such active obedience as that which our Lord rendered throughout His life a passive element is involved. The obedience exposes to suffering on account of the difficulty and opposition which must be encountered without, and of the sensitiveness of the emotional and physical nature within. And if there was a passive element in our Lord's active fulfilment of His Father's will, still more was there an active element in His endurance of suffering and death. Indeed, so entirely predominant is this activity, that the words passive endurance seem wholly out of place. Of His life our Lord said, "No one taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself" (John x. 18). From the moment when "He set His face to go up to Jerusalem" to

the moment when He cried "It is finished," our Lord's attitude was that of one who was consummating a great act of self-oblation. The obedience which fulfilled the law and accomplished the ministry had its highest and most active manifestation in the offering of death. The distinction, therefore, as it is carried out, is thoroughly artificial, and does violence to the whole spirit of the Passion, as exhibited in the gospels.

Moreover, this distinction does violence to that spirit in the interests of a radically imperfect view of satisfaction. First, it is laid down that the demand for satisfaction is for the mere endurance of a penalty. This excludes that active self-surrender of which the Scriptures say so much in setting forth the nature of the Atonement. It excludes also that obedience in life which was the preparation for our Lord's obedience in death. But, undoubtedly, according to the Scriptures, these have their importance for the work of salvation. Equally certain is it that the mere passive endurance of a penalty contains within it no inspiration of a new life, just because it is the mere relinquishment of the spirit to something which is inflicted upon it from without. But it is clear that more than this is required in men in order to salvation, and also that the Scriptures assign a redemptive value to the active spirit in Christ, which has been shut out. Hence, the element which has been excluded by the narrow definition of satisfaction is brought back under the name of active obedience, and a function is found for it in supplying that positive righteousness which the purely passive endurance of a penalty seemed to have no power to confer.

Again, the consequence of fixing attention simply upon the passive endurance of the cross is to withdraw from the atoning sacrifice its power to express the active approach of sinners to God by faith in Christ. It does, indeed, remove the obstacles to their approach, but the approach itself is made in union with the active righteousness of Christ, and not by means of His cross. This, however, is untrue to the Scriptures, and destroys not only the sufficiency of the cross, but its continuous and vital relationship to the life of justification. Guilt is removed by the offering once made; faith accepts the release procured, and the death of Christ, which procured it, is the object of unceasing gratitude. But the sense of union with Christ, and the continuous impression made upon the spiritual life by Christ in consequence of union with Him, are treated as resulting rather from His life than from His death. And this, again, contradicts the typical consciousness of Christians as unfolded by St. Paul. Our living relationship is, by faith, to one undivided Christ, to Christ crucified, to Christ, whose crucifixion in its perfect blending of the active and the passive is at once the only completed satisfaction, the ground of our acceptance with God, and the all-embracing standard to which we are "made conformable" by the "power of His resurrection."

Once more, this view rests upon a mistaken conception of the relationship of mankind to God, apart from sin, and of the relationship of the believer to God, when delivered from the guilt of sin by the death of Christ.

As to the former, a leading English exponent of the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ says that "the justification of a man in his primitive state did flow

from his own proper righteousness,"[1] so that sin is held to have introduced a fundamental change in the ground of man's acceptance with God. But the doctrine of the original relationship of the Son of God to mankind taught by St. Paul and by St. John renders this original independence impossible, and makes it apparent that, sin apart, the standing of man before God is not in himself, but in and through the Son of God. When, therefore, the sinner believes in Christ crucified, and enters into spiritual union with Him, the result is not a mere acquittal, leaving him outside both heaven and hell until the distinct imputation of Christ's active righteousness translates him to the heaven of justification: his faith brings about his union with Christ, and his release from guilt through the death of Christ, and consequently, in resuming his true relations to Christ, he is restored *ipso facto* to access to the Father; and, in union with Christ, the merit of Christ's death, and not His active obedience merely, continuously avails as a satisfaction for the shortcomings of his own personal righteousness.[2]

Before passing from this account, a word must be said as to the mischievous effects which resulted from the one-sided development of the doctrine of the penal aspect of our Lord's sufferings, after the ethical and active elements had been withdrawn from them. The only means of

[1] Dr. Thomas Goodwin, *Of Christ the Mediator*, chap. xix.

[2] It seems unfair on the part of those who hold evangelical views of the Atonement to attack those who teach the imputation of Christ's righteousness to sinners on the ground that such imputation is fictitious. It is no more fictitious to impute Christ's doing to us than His suffering, as is taught by those who hold that our Lord's atoning death avails for us. In both cases, our Lord's eternal relationship to us saves the transference properly understood from being fictitious.

satisfaction left was that of suffering, and the measure of the sufficiency of the satisfaction was the intensity of the suffering. Indeed, the condition of forgiveness was understood to be that our Lord should endure sufferings equivalent to those which the elect would have endured had they been eternally damned. Dr. John Owen speaks as follows: "Now from all this, thus much (to clear up the nature of the satisfaction made by Christ) appeareth; namely, it was a full, valuable compensation, made to the justice of God, for all the sins of all those for whom He made satisfaction, by undergoing that same punishment which, by reason of the obligation that was upon them, they themselves were bound to undergo. When I say *the same*, I mean essentially the same in weight and pressure, though not in all accidents of duration and the like, for it was impossible that He should be detained by death."[1]

Against this doctrine the Socinians raised a protest.[2] To their contention, that if Christ underwent sufferings equivalent to those which the elect would otherwise have everlastingly endured, forgiveness is a matter of right and not of grace, the Calvinist theologians replied, that the grace consists in the free institution of the covenant, which provides for this substitution. In order to secure the needed equivalence, it became necessary to hold that our Lord, in a literal sense, experienced "the pains of hell," and the comparative caution with which Calvin had spoken on this subject[3] was abandoned by many. Such a doctrine, by its insistence that the en-

[1] *Works*, vol. x., p. 269. Edition of Johnstone and Hunter.

[2] See Appendix, p. 474 *seq.* [3] See Appendix, p. 469; also chap. v.

durance of a previously measured degree of suffering is the condition imposed by justice as indispensable to forgiveness, is to us repulsive; it travesties the true nature of satisfaction, and raises moral indignation against the principles upon which God acts towards sinners.

We may sum up by saying that the value of this account is in the stress it lays upon the life of our Lord, and upon our abiding relationship to Him, together with its insistence upon the entrance of our Lord into the experience of the consequences of sin; but that the distinction drawn between the active and the passive obedience of Christ is artificial and, in many respects, misleading, and that the conception of satisfaction is at once degraded by being emptied of all ethical significance, and made repulsive by the exaggerated importance attached to suffering as such.

Grotius

Some separate notice must be taken of the account of the Atonement given by Grotius, the most distinguished follower of Arminius, both because of its striking peculiarities and also because of the influence it has exerted on English theology. For a fuller account of it, and of the controversial necessities which gave rise to it, the reader must be referred to the Appendix.

The principal features of this account are as follows In explaining the Atonement we must seek the key, not by regarding God as a judge administering justice, but as a ruler concerned for the highest ends of His government. The whole method of forgiving sinners on account of

the death of Christ is a "relaxation" of the law. And this relaxation God as ruler is competent to make But while the forgiveness of sins is entirely within the divine prerogative, it is expedient, for the maintenance of His government, that a satisfaction should be demanded This satisfaction (*satisfactio*) must be distinguished from the exact payment of the debt (*solutio*). The death of Christ is exacted therefore, not as the equivalent of the punishment of sinners, but as the most striking means of placing in clear light the character of God, the heinousness of sin, and the authority of the law. God "most wisely chose that way by which He might at the same time manifest the greater number of His attributes, both clemency and severity, a hatred of sin, and care for preserving the law." Such a manifestation does not require the punishment of the sinner himself It may be secured by the punishment of another, provided that he is connected with the sinner and is of sufficient dignity. And both these conditions are fulfilled by Christ, who is God, and was predestined to be connected with the human race as its Head. Such, in short, is the view set forth in the *Defence of the Catholic Faith concerning the Satisfaction of Christ.*

It is impossible not to admire the controversial skilfulness and subtilty of this account, regarded in its relation to the controversy between the Calvinists and the Socinians, which called it forth. But, in reality, it surrendered the strongest points of the Calvinist position, and took up instead ground which it was impossible in the long run to maintain. Its selection of the relationship of sovereignty, to the exclusion of all

others, for the explanation of the Atonement was thoroughly unsatisfactory, not only because it shut out others which were entitled to consideration, but because the one which was selected is not fundamental, being based upon other profounder relationships, which constitute it. The distinctive features of God's rulership are derived, as we shall presently see, from sources deeper than itself; and to explain the actions of God from the necessities of His government is a mark of shallowness of thought, of powerlessness to grasp the deepest realities of the case.

But even from the standpoint of governmental interests, the reasons given for the Atonement seem inconclusive. If there be nothing in the nature of God, of man, and of the relationship between them which, strictly speaking, demands satisfaction, then to argue that the government of God requires it seems to overlook certain essential differences between the sovereignty of God and that of men, and to involve an altogether mistaken application of the circumstances of the latter to the former.

First, God's kingdom has interior and spiritual means of asserting itself, being in this respect entirely unlike human governments, which need to proclaim their intentions by impressive outward acts. Secondly, the sanctions of the divine government are continuous, and not like those of human governments, which are intermittent. These sanctions—temporal and eternal—are a continued witness that "God is not mocked." Thirdly, the divine forgiveness is conditioned by repentance; and God in this respect also is unlike earthly rulers,

for He has perfect power to discern penitence, and to measure its sincerity and thoroughness. All these differences render it unsafe to argue from the necessities of earthly rulers to those of God.

But even if it be conceded that the ends of the divine government demand such a display of God's mind towards sin as is contained in the Atonement, yet the whole force of that display depends upon its being a *fulfilment* of all righteousness, and not a *relaxation* of it. An act which simply reveals the mind of the actor, without reference to the realities to which it should be related, is an arbitrary act. And if God Himself gave Christ over to death, simply in order to reveal His own mind, His action only avoids the charge of being arbitrary because we have a suppressed consciousness that more is involved in the government of God, and in the revelation of His mind, than this account explicitly declares. It is the proof that God is determined to uphold righteousness at all costs that will strengthen His moral government, not the revelation that, although He is pleased of His mercy to relax righteousness, He still has a great personal hatred of sin.

And yet there are here two points of great importance. The Atonement does strengthen the moral government of God; it does declare His mind as to sin. It was intended to serve both these ends. Grotius and those who, following him, have dwelt on the claims of what they called rectoral justice are, to a certain extent right. But these two ends are accomplished by the death of Christ, only because it arises out of more vital relationships, and satisfies deeper necessities, than these.

Dr. Dale

It will be best to consider next in order the account of Dr. R. W. Dale in his lectures on *The Atonement*, not only because he is the latest writer who has produced a deep impression on the English mind by his presentation of the doctrine of satisfaction, but also because in presenting it he has introduced modifications of great importance, which are intended to obviate the impression of arbitrariness and of regard for purely personal rights created by the previous treatment of the subject.

In proceeding to examine Dr. Dale's special view, a humble tribute of admiration and reverence must be paid to one of the noblest characters which have been given to the Christian Church in recent times. The robust manliness, the ethical fervour, the evangelical faith, the profound experience of fellowship with God in Christ, which characterised the man, impress the reader in every page of his writings, and exert a most powerful spiritual and moral influence, even when, perhaps, his particular conclusions fail to carry complete intellectual conviction. This is the case with his peculiar doctrine of the necessity and nature of satisfaction. Unless I am greatly mistaken, it must be pronounced philosophically unsatisfactory; but none the less it sets forth most important elements of the truth in a most impressive way.

Dr. Dale's account must be quoted at length. It is as follows:[1]

"But if the punishment of sin is a divine act—an

[1] *The Atonement*, seventeenth edition, p. 391.

act in which the identity between the will of God and the eternal law of righteousness is asserted and expressed—it would appear that, if in any case the penalties of sin are remitted, some other divine act of at least equal intensity, and in which the ill-desert of sin is expressed with at least equal energy, must take its place.

"The heart of the whole problem lies here. The eternal law of righteousness declares that sin deserves to be punished. The will of God is identified both by the conscience and the religious intuitions of man with the eternal law of righteousness. To separate the ideal law—or any part of it—from the living and divine Person, is to bring darkness and chaos on the moral and spiritual universe. The whole law—the authority of its precepts, the justice of its penalties—must be asserted in the divine acts, or else the divine will cannot be perfectly identified with the eternal law of righteousness. If God does not assert the principle that sin deserves punishment by punishing it, He must assert that principle in some other way. Some divine act is required which shall have all the moral worth and significance of the act by which the penalties of sin would have been inflicted on the sinner.

"The Christian Atonement is the fulfilment of that necessity. The principle that suffering—suffering of the most terrible kind—is the just desert of sin is not suppressed. It would have been adequately asserted had God inflicted on man the penalties of transgression. It is asserted in a still grander form, and by a divine act, which in its awful sublimity and unique glory infinitely transcends the mere infliction of suffering on those who have

sinned. The penalties are not simply held back by the strong hand of infinite love. He on whom the sins of men had brought the dread necessity of asserting the principle that they deserved to suffer, and who, as it seems to us, could not decline to assert it—He through whose lips the sentence of the eternal law of righteousness must have come, condemning those who had sinned to exile from the light and life of God—He by whose power the sentence must have been executed—He Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, laid aside His eternal glory, assumed our nature, was forsaken of God, died on the cross, that the sins of men might be remitted. It belonged to Him to assert, by His own act, that suffering is the just result of sin. He asserts it, not by inflicting suffering on the sinner, but by enduring suffering Himself.

"Nor is this all. To affirm that, on the cross, the Moral Ruler of our race endured what He might have inflicted, is an inadequate representation of the truth. If God's love for His creatures invests the divine act which punishes them with its highest moral value, the love of the eternal Father for the Son invests with infinite moral sublimity the divine act which surrendered Him to desertion and to death, that the justice of the penalties of sin might be affirmed before the penalties were remitted. The mysterious unity of the Father and the Son rendered it possible for God at once to endure and to inflict penal suffering, and to do both under conditions which constitute the infliction and the endurance the grandest moment in the moral history of God."

We may sum up the substance of this passage by

saying that Dr. Dale's view is, that our Lord's death is a satisfaction for sin on account of its being the endurance of penal suffering; that this suffering is imposed by the Father, and endured by the Son, as an assertion of the identity of the will of God with the eternal law of righteousness which is alive in God; and that in asserting this our Lord's death is an act of "equal intensity" with the punishment of sin. The explanation avoids the difficulties of the doctrine of equivalence by the substitution of "equal intensity"; it avoids the appearance of being arbitrary by treating the Atonement as an act of self-identification with the eternal law which was necessary in order to the forgiveness of sins. Instead of claiming something on the ground of personal rights, or in the interests of His government, God pays something as His tribute to the law, which is independent of Him, although alive in Him. Dr. Dale would object, perhaps, to the form of the last statement, but it is substantially correct.

It is evident that the account depends for its validity upon the truth of Dr. Dale's doctrine: first, of the relation of God to the eternal law of righteousness; and, secondly, of the meaning of punishment as defining the nature of the satisfaction to be provided in order to forgiveness. To these two points our examination must be directed.

I. Is Dr. Dale's view of the relation of God to the eternal law of righteousness satisfactory? We are here approaching a subject of the greatest difficulty. Passing by naturalistic hypotheses, which do not now concern us, three different answers have been given to the question, What is the ground of the distinction between right and wrong? It has been variously held to be founded on the will of

God, on His nature, and on an eternal fitness of things to which even the nature and the will of God are subject. With none of these answers does Dr. Dale agree. The first answer, that which derives moral distinctions from the will of God, Dr. Dale rejects for the following reasons: First, because "if it were true, it would be difficult to account for the recognition of moral obligation where the existence of God is denied or doubted."[1] Secondly, because "if the will of God is the original fountain of all moral distinctions; if righteousness is right only because He commands it, and if sin is evil only because He forbids it; if therefore, had He so willed, all the virtues would have merited our moral condemnation, and all the vices our moral approval,—how is it possible for us to love and reverence God because of His moral excellence?"[2] And, thirdly, because "righteousness is the fulfilment of moral obligations; but moral obligations can never be originated by mere will, even if that will be the will of God. A mere command can never create a duty, unless there is an antecedent obligation to obey the authority from which the command proceeds."[3] The first of these reasons seems to be due to a curious misconception. Even if the distinction between right and wrong originated in the will of God, it would undoubtedly be His will to implant it, and the sense of obligation to observe it, in His creatures as part of their natural outfit, quite independent of any conscious recognition of Him on their part. But the second and third reasons are conclusive.

Dr. Dale affirms that these objections "may be urged

[1] See *The Atonement*, p. 364. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 368. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 369.

in another form against the theory that finds the origin of these distinctions in the nature of God." He says that "conscience does not rest the moral obligation of justice on the fact that God is just, but affirms that justice is of universal and necessary obligation. We do not reverence righteousness merely because by righteousness men become like God; we reverence God Himself because He is righteous, thus affirming that righteousness in itself, and not simply because it is a divine attribute, is deserving of reverence."[1]

It seems, therefore, that we are shut up to accepting the third answer, that of Dr. Samuel Clarke, which asserts the existence of an eternal fitness[2] of things, independent of both the nature and the will of God. But this, again, for Dr. Dale is impossible, for it is contrary to the supremacy of God, and "even in idea nothing can be higher than God."[3] Hence the result is reached, that the relation between God and the eternal law of righteousness is unique. "He is not, as we are, bound by its authority; in Him its authority is actively asserted. To describe Him as doing homage to it—although a phrase which it may sometimes be almost necessary to employ, is by implication to strip Him of His moral sovereignty; the homage which is due to the law is due to Him. The law does not claim Him as the most illustrious and glorious of its subjects; it is supreme in His supremacy. His relation to the law is not a relation of subjection, but

[1] *The Atonement*, p. 370.

[2] Objection may, of course, be taken to the use of the word "fitness" to express the moral quality of actions. But this does not touch the substance of the matter, and need not detain us here.

[3] *The Atonement*, p. 371.

of identity. Hence He 'cannot be tempted of evil.' In God the law is *alive*; it reigns on His throne, sways His sceptre, is crowned with His glory."[1] But, unless I am greatly mistaken, it is impossible to establish any real difference between this explanation and that which derives moral distinctions from the nature of God. Dr. Dale says that God and the eternal law of righteousness are identical. Then how distinguish them? He adds that "in God the law is *alive*." Then what would it be without Him? Having found it alive and asserted in Him, we can, indeed, abstract it, and endow it, in imagination, with *quasi* independence, in much the same fashion as did Plato with his intelligible archetypes set over against sensible percepts. But we are dealing with an abstraction none the less, and with an abstraction which cannot be thought out of relation to the living beings who embody it. As Dr. Martineau has well said, moral relations "are conditional on the existence of souls."[2] But even if this were not so, Dr. Dale places himself in an impossible position. He seeks to obtain the advantages of Dr. Clarke's hypothesis, without being willing to pay the necessary price by regarding God as the first subject of the law, and therefore is obliged to introduce qualifications which leave his position only verbally, and not speculatively, distinguishable from the second answer dismissed by him.

Are, then, the objections sound which Dr. Dale has stated to the explanation that the law of righteousness is based upon the nature of God? I think not. In the first place, can we apply moral epithets to Him, if the good

[1] *The Atonement*, p. 372.

[2] *Types of Ethical Theory*, second edition, vol. ii., p. 469.

which He does is simply the manifestation of His own nature? Surely we can. What is meant when we call men righteous or good? In the first place, we refer to their outward conduct in the various relationships of life, and then to the inner purposes from which it proceeds, and we say that both these are just and good. But by this we mean that, in adopting such principles and carrying out such conduct, they are realising their own nature, and assisting in the realisation of the nature of those with regard to whom they act. And if their nature, or the nature of those with regard to whom they act, were fundamentally altered, the positive content of what is just and good would be fundamentally altered also. When, then, we speak of a man being just and good, we mean that he adopts principles and conduct which are true to the highest demands of his own nature and that of those in relation to whom he acts.

Let us apply this to the character of God. We must do so cautiously, of course; for there are two important differences in this matter between the Creator and His creatures. They receive from Him the law of their being, while His nature is underived; and they attain to moral goodness by a process of moral growth, while His perfections are eternally realised. But this does not substantially affect the matter. God is righteous and good, because both in purpose and in action, as well in the internal relations of the Godhead as in the external relations in which He stands to His creatures, He is unfailingly true to the law of His own nature and of theirs. The object and test of righteousness and goodness is not merely attainment to a standard, but the highest fulfilment of life. Were any change introduced into the purposes and actions of God, it

would be to the impoverishment of His life and that of His creatures. That He is always true to both is what we mean by calling Him righteous and good, and it is, as thus true, that He is the realised ideal after which, in the process of our moral development, we strive.

The attempt to get behind the nature of God, who fills and rules all things, only lands us in unreal abstractions, and in distinctions of words which correspond to no distinctions in the realities of things. Righteousness and goodness need for their realisation not eternal and independent standards, but real personal relations. He is righteous and good who in those relations so purposes and acts as to secure, so far as in him lies, the highest and best life of himself, and equally of those to whom he is related. That highest and best life depends on the nature of the parties standing in mutual relations. In the case of the creatures, that nature is derived; in that of God, it is underived, but eternally realised in the divine fellowship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. But faithfulness to the fellowship of love within the Holy Trinity, faithfulness to the ends of love in the relationship between God and creation, and in both faithfulness to the spiritual nature, which is love, is the meaning of the righteousness and goodness of God.

In conclusion, it may be pointed out that there is no hint in the New Testament of this relation of the Father and the Son to an eternal law distinct from Them. Our Lord constantly speaks of His dealing with the Father, but there is no sign whatever of any consciousness on His part that He was dealing with an impersonal law, even though a law alive in God. Everywhere it is the

consciousness of a personal relationship which is uttered and to introduce Dr. Dale's metaphysic of ethics would destroy the simplicity of the whole. If all this be so, the attempt to show that the demand for satisfaction in order to forgiveness is rather an offering by God than a demand made by Him,—is a demand only made by Him because of supreme interests with which He must identify Himself,—fails in the form in which Dr. Dale makes it, but succeeds in another way. The Atonement does not concern only the personal life, the rights, or the majesty of God; and the demand for it is not a self-regarding demand, which might conceivably have been abandoned. The whole dealing is between God, on the one hand, and mankind, constituted in the Son of God, on the other. The law of righteousness is determined by the nature of both these parties, and the relations in which they stand to one another, and, once those relations are set up, is independent of the mere will of God. It is something which the righteousness and goodness of God alike prompt Him to assert. The consideration of these relations, and their bearing upon the nature and the necessity of the Atonement, must be reserved for the next chapter.

II. We have now to examine Dr. Dale's doctrine of the ends of punishment. He opposes the three views: that it is for the reformation of the offender; that it is intended to reinforce the authority of the law in the community; that it is designed to express the personal resentment of God at the indignity done to His honour. His conclusion is, "that the only conception of punishment which satisfies our strongest and most definite moral convictions, and which corresponds to the place it occupies both in the

organisation of society and in the moral order of the universe, is that which represents it as pain and loss inflicted for the violation of a law."[1] "Suffering," he says, "inflicted upon a man to make him better in the future is not punishment, but discipline." And hence "the sufferings which punish sin in this world, and the sufferings which will punish it in the next, are the expression of the irreconcilable antagonism of God to sin and to those who persist in sinning. They are an assertion by God Himself of the principle that those who sin deserve to suffer. It is this which gives them their transcendent significance."[2]

It seems to me that this is an overhasty generalisation from the case of civil punishment, as the latter presented itself to Dr. Dale's mind. To attempt to investigate whether he has given us a true account even of civil punishment would lead us too far afield. Suffice to say, that disciplinary considerations make themselves felt with growing force in the legislative, judicial, and administrative treatment of crime, and that it is impossible to exclude them on merely abstract grounds.

Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret.

And the community must wait till it gets the motives and practice of punishment in their final form before it can be certain that its philosophical writers have included all the elements which are involved, and have assigned to each its legitimate weight. But this, at least, surely may be said, that the ends of punishment are profoundly affected by the relationship in which he who inflicts it stands to him upon whom it is inflicted. The closer the relationships which

[1] *The Atonement*, p. 383. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 390.

call for the punitive act, the more are the elements which enter into, and are expressed by, the chastisement. Suppose that, for the judicial authority of the State, it is enough that the punishment is deserved, and that therefore its motive is simply to inflict punishment in order to mark the heinousness of the crime; yet this is an insufficient explanation of the action of a father chastising his child. In the latter case, equally with the former, there is the conviction that the punishment is deserved, and the desire to mark the violation of a law by pain and loss; but, with the closer and more comprehensive relationship comes the sense of further responsibility for securing spiritual ends through the punishment, — or, at least, attempting to secure them. Surely in the home, at any rate, punishment does not cease to be punishment because it is discipline. It ceases to be discipline only when the character of the child has become hopeless. If, as punishment, it is to serve the purposes of discipline, it must have been deserved; in other words, it must be just. And it must have been inflicted in order to bring home the ill-desert of the conduct which has called it forth. But this very marking of ill-desert by punishment is made by the father to serve the purposes of the moral training of his child, and simply to say that it marks his ill-desert is to make, indeed, a true statement, yet to leave us only on the threshold of the problem.

Dr. Dale admits this himself. He italicises the following statement: "Whatever moral element there is in punishment itself, as punishment, is derived from the person or power that inflicts it."[1] But here, again, there

[1] *The Atonement*, p. 386.

seems to be the same fruitless attempt to maintain an abstraction which we have found in Dr. Dale's treatment of the relationship of the eternal law of righteousness to God. The moral element contributed by the person or power inflicting punishment is exerted in and through the punishment, which is a directly personal act; and if it is deliberately exerted in and through the punishment, it must be credited to the punishment as expressing his mind and intention, and not to him who inflicts it apart from what he inflicts.

If all this be true, the question of relationship must be settled before we can give a final answer as to the ends contemplated, even in cases of human punishment. And not less necessary is it when we are concerned with the punishment of sin by God. The relationship in which He stands to us must be investigated before we can pronounce as to the ends which the penal sanctions of His law have in view. And that this subject is nowhere dealt with seems to me the greatest shortcoming of Dr. Dale's treatise. He does, indeed, lay down[1] that, in seeking a theory of the Atonement, we must "consider the death of Christ itself, in its real relation to God and man." But it is not sufficient to set the death of Christ in relation to God and man, considered apart from one another. It must be set in the light of the mutual relationships of God and mankind, so that it may be seen to arise naturally out of them, and to satisfy their requirements. And this Dr. Dale has never attempted to do. In his more recent work on *Christian Doctrine*, he has deliberately rejected the only relationship which can explain the matter—the Fatherhood of God. In his lectures on the Atonement he has

[1] *The Atonement*, p. 359.

neglected the question altogether. He has devoted great strength to the consideration of the relationship of God to the eternal law of righteousness, but has neglected His relationship to mankind. Hence his reasoning is abstract, and seems to shut out many of the features which are obviously present in the teaching of the Scriptures, and are suggested by human analogies.

Dr. Dale's doctrine of satisfaction stands or falls with his doctrine of the ends of punishment. For him the atoning value of the death of Christ lies in the fact that it is suffering inflicted by the Father, and endured by the Son, as an act expressing the ill-desert of sin, with "at least equal intensity" to the punishment which the offenders would have otherwise borne. That Dr. Dale should consider this aspect of the great sacrifice exhaustive, appears to be accounted for only by the fact that, notwithstanding the elaborate verbal safeguards which he has set up, the impersonal law of righteousness is more vividly present to his mind, in constructing his account, than the personal God. Is the negative expression of the ill-desert of sin the whole essence of satisfaction? and, even if it is so, is that expression to be wholly made in terms of suffering? Is not the positive assertion that "the law is holy, and just, and good" equally necessary? Nay, is it not primary? and does it not form the basis for the negative expression of the ill-desert of sin? Surely all spiritual satisfaction for transgression of the law involves an act of spiritual adhesion to the law, quite as much as unresisting submission to punishment for breach of the law. And, so far as the Scriptures reveal the mind of Christ to us, was it not occupied equally, to say the least, with His positive self-

surrender to the authority and will of the Father as with the expression of the heinousness of sin? No sufficient account of the sacrifice of the cross can be given which does not find place for this positive side, and which does not lay stress upon the spiritual confession of both the one and the other, as well as upon the declaration of both by means of suffering inflicted and endured. If those positive and spiritual aspects be included in the satisfaction, the simple and natural majesty of the Scripture narrative can be maintained; for the death of Christ is, first and foremost, the natural expression by Him of the highest spiritual life. But if these aspects be omitted, not only is the residual satisfaction defective, but the death of Christ, which strikes home to us in the gospels by the glory of its naturalness, is converted into an artificial arrangement, which loses much of its sublimity by being an expedient.

To conclude, much of the difficulty in which this account is involved is caused by the inference of Dr. Dale, that the Atonement cannot be presented to God because He Himself has provided it. It is true that this is only definitely said by him in his criticism of the term "ransom" as applied to the Atonement. "God Himself provided the ransom," he says; "He could not pay it to Himself."[1] But this judgment colours the whole of his treatment. The consequent endeavour to discover a way by which the Atonement may be represented as demanded for what is both another and not another than God, namely, the eternal law of righteousness, without injury to the sovereignty of God, has led Dr. Dale into a statement

[1] *The Atonement*, p. 397.

which is not only speculatively untenable, but excludes from the satisfaction the positive ethical content of our Lord's death as exhibited in the Scriptures. Not the less do we owe Dr. Dale a very great debt, not only for other services to the doctrine, which are recognised elsewhere in this book, and for the moral impression which his handling of the whole subject produces, but, above all, from the dogmatic standpoint, for his insistence upon the important truth that God, in demanding and supplying a satisfaction for sin, is satisfying the law of righteousness, which is by no means merely His own personal will; and for his vindication of the truth that God must mark the ill-desert of sin by suffering, and that the Atonement therefore involved, of necessity, the sufferings of our Lord. An added burden is laid upon all who follow Dr. Dale, in treating of this subject, to do justice to both of these truths, which he has impressed upon us with so great a moral weight.

Dr. M'Leod Campbell

When we pass from the account of Dr. Dale to that given by Dr. M'Leod Campbell in his work on *The Nature of the Atonement*, it is to receive an explanation of our Lord's satisfaction which lays the greatest emphasis on the aspects left largely out of account by Dr. Dale, to the exclusion of those on which the latter most strongly insists. For Dr. Dale, as we have seen, the essence of the divine satisfaction lies in the sufferings to which the Son of God submitted; for Dr. Campbell, it lies so exclusively in the spiritual attitude of our Lord, that His sufferings seem to be almost accidental to it.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to Dr. M'Leod Campbell for so impressive an exposition of these aspects of the Atonement, even though it is impossible to accept his view altogether as it stands. The profound spiritual insight of the writer, his deep reverence, his vivid realisation of the truth that our Lord's work is to be interpreted in the light of His Sonship, and that His Sonship reveals the life for which mankind has been redeemed, make his book not only to be of great importance to the theologian, but in the truest sense a book of devotion to the ordinary Christian reader; and this in spite of peculiarities of style and exposition which make it, in parts, somewhat difficult to read.

In the Introduction to the second edition the principle upon which the book proceeds is thus laid down: "Assuming the Incarnation, I have sought to realise the divine mind in Christ as perfect Sonship towards God and perfect brotherhood towards men; and, doing so, the Incarnation has appeared, developing itself naturally and necessarily as the Atonement. This attempt to see the Atonement by the light of the Incarnation is so far an attempt to answer Anselm's question, 'Cur Deus Homo?' by the light of the divine fact itself as to which the question is put, instead of seeking an answer, as he has done, in considerations exterior to that fact." He adds that his endeavour and hope has been to keep "within the limits of self-evidencing light," and hence to set down nothing "as having a place in the life of Christ which has not really had such a place."[1] The principle of seeking

[1] *The Nature of the Atonement*, Introduction to the second edition, p. xvii.

the explanation of the Atonement "by the light of the divine fact itself" is sound, and in no theological inquiry is it of greater importance to assert it and to be faithful to it. The latter, however, is by no means easy, for it demands not only that everything which we set down should have had a place in the life of Christ, but, conversely, that everything which had a place in the life of Christ should have a place also in our interpretation of it.

The constructive part of the book is mainly divided into two parts, the former dealing with the "retrospective aspect of the Atonement," the latter with the "prospective aspect of the Atonement." We are chiefly concerned with the former. It has two aspects: our Lord's dealing with men on behalf of God, and His dealing with God on behalf of men.

Our Lord's dealing with men on behalf of God consists in His exhibition of the divine mind towards sin. This is seen in the sufferings which He endured. They are by no means to be regarded as penal. "*The Sufferer suffers* what He suffers *just through seeing sin and sinners with God's eyes, and feeling in reference to them with God's heart.* Is *such* suffering a *punishment*? Is God, in causing such a divine experience in humanity, inflicting a punishment? There can be but one answer."[1]

The essence of the sacrifice, therefore, does not lie in the sufferings as such. "The question to which I have led you is this: the sufferings of Christ in making His soul an offering for sin being what they were, was it the pain as pain and as a penal infliction, or was it the pain

[1] *The Nature of the Atonement*, fifth edition, p. 101.

as a condition and form of holiness and love under the pressure of our sin and its consequent misery, that is presented to our faith as the essence of the sacrifice and its atoning virtue?"[1] The answer given is, of course, the latter.

It is in respect of this manifestation of holiness and love that the sufferings of our Lord are a vindication of the divine name. "What a vindicating of the divine name, and of the character of the Lawgiver, are the sufferings now contemplated, considered as themselves the manifestation in humanity of what our sins are to God, compared to that to which they are reduced if conceived of as a punishment inflicted by God."[2]

Dr. M'Leod Campbell thus states his view of the Atonement as a dealing with God on behalf of men: "That oneness of mind with the Father, which towards men took the form of condemnation of sin, would in the Son's dealing with the Father in relation to our sins take the form of a perfect confession of our sins. This confession, as to its own nature, must have been *a perfect Amen in humanity to the judgment of God on the sin of man.*"[3] This response "has all the elements of a perfect repentance in humanity for all the sin of man,—a perfect sorrow—a perfect contrition—all the elements of such a repentance, and that in absolute perfection, all—excepting the personal consciousness of sin: and by that perfect response in Amen to the mind of God in relation to sin is the wrath of God rightly met, and that is accorded to divine justice which is its due, and could alone satisfy it."[4]

[1] *The Nature of the Atonement*, pp. 101, 102.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 115. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 116. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

President Edwards had suggested this conception in his *Satisfaction of Sin* (chap. ii. 1–3), by laying down "that sin must be punished with an infinite punishment"—"unless there could be such a thing as a repentance, humiliation, and sorrow for this (namely, sin), proportionable to the greatness of the majesty despised," but had dismissed this "equivalent sorrow and repentance" as out of the question. But in Dr. M'Leod Campbell's judgment it is this alternative which has been fulfilled. He says: "The Incarnation of the Son of God not only *made possible* such a moral and spiritual expiation for sin as that of which the thought thus visited the mind of Edwards, but, indeed, caused that it *must be*."[1] And there is something more than this repentance. "We must consider," he says, "not only the response which was in that 'Amen' to the divine condemnation of sin, but also the *response which was in it to the divine love in its yearnings over us as sinners*."[2]

The conception "of the atoning virtue of Christ's expiatory confession of man's sin" is illustrated by "the supposition that all the sin of man had been committed by one human spirit, and that that spirit, preserving its personal identity, and retaining the memory of what it had been, should become perfectly righteous."[3]

The brief extracts which have been given are sufficient to show how important a contribution we have here towards the discovery of the spiritual principle of the Atonement. Dr. M'Leod Campbell does indeed penetrate to the heart of the matter, when he makes our Lord's perfect Sonship the relationship out of which the whole

[1] *The Nature of the Atonement*, p. 119.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 127. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

must be explained; when, in the light of that Sonship, he lays down that the conditions of expiation must be spiritual, and seeks to discover what they must necessarily be; and, finally, when he finds the point of connexion between our Lord's act and our salvation in this, that our Lord's perfect realisation of the filial spirit is the revelation of the possibilities of mankind, and the spiritual means of their fulfilment. In insisting that union with the mind of God as to sin, and the active expression of that union to God through sufferings and in spiritual solidarity with mankind, are of the essence of the Atonement, this book puts us on the high road to a true conception of the matter.

But there are serious shortcomings in the detailed treatment of the subject.

1. To begin with, there is an inconsistency, which is never cleared up, as to the relation of our Lord's death to the penalties of transgression. In the earlier part of the book, as we have seen, the penal element in our Lord's sufferings is strongly denied, and their cause is said to be the "seeing sin and sinners with God's eyes, and feeling in reference to them with God's heart." Here those elements of our Lord's sufferings, of which physical death is the climax and the symbol, are left entirely out of sight, although the Scriptures set these in the forefront. By leaving them out of sight, the question, What is involved in the fact that the sinless Son of God tasted death? and the further question, What does that death which He tasted mean? are kept from arising, and the explanation of the Atonement is given before they have been asked. But in the end they assert themselves, and, as Dr. Orr has pointed

out,[1] the writer is carried over the threshold of the penal view. Then we are told that "as our Lord alone truly tasted death, so to Him alone had death its perfect meaning as the wages of sin, for in Him alone was there full entrance into the mind of God towards sin, and perfect unity with that mind."[2] And farther on we find, that "in Christ's honouring of the righteous law of God, the *sentence of the law* was included, as well as *the mind of God* which that sentence expressed. . . . Had sin existed in men as mere spirits, death could not have been the wages of sin, and any response to the divine mind concerning sin which would have been an Atonement for their sin could only have had spiritual elements; but man being by the constitution of humanity capable of death, and death having come as the wages of sin, it was not simply sin that had to be dealt with, but an existing law with its penalty of death, and that death as already incurred. So it was not only the divine mind that had to be responded to, but also that expression of the divine mind which was contained in God's making death the wages of sin."[3] This carries us at once to a more difficult inquiry. We need to know, first of all, what death means as the expression of the divine mind; then, what it meant that death should light on Christ. The laying of death, the wages of sin, on Christ needs to be understood before we consider the nature of Christ's response to that imposition. The subject is raised at too late a stage of the inquiry for justice to be done to it in the construction of a theory. But when it is raised, Dr. M'Leod Campbell makes

[1] *The Christian View of God and the World*, pp. 360, 361.
[2] *The Nature of the Atonement*, p. 260. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 260.

admissions which go far to modify his preceding explanation, though that explanation has so taken hold of him that he is occupied with our Lord's "*response*," to the almost entire exclusion of the divine act to which that response is made.

2. Secondly, our Lord's response is said to have "all the elements of a perfect repentance in humanity, . . . except the personal consciousness of sin." In the scriptural sense of the term—a spiritual revolution brought about by the act of the penitent himself—this is obviously untrue, for our Lord needed no such spiritual revolution. In the modified sense of contrition, to which the word has often been improperly restricted, it is equally impossible in the case of our Lord. And thus what is most entirely absent from the attitude of our Lord is most vital to repentance. We cannot exaggerate the intimacy of our Lord's organic relation to us or His consequent sympathy with us. But in doing justice to this we must never forget our Lord's sinlessness, or in theory damage the integrity of His personal consciousness.[1]

At the same time, if I apprehend the matter rightly, we have here the faulty expression of a great truth. While it is impossible to say that our Lord offered a

[1] It is remarkable to find the same view expressed by Dr. John Henry Newman. He says in a striking but over-strained sermon on "The Mental Sufferings of our Lord in His Passion": "They [our sins] are upon Him, they are all His own; He cries to His Father as if He were the criminal, not the victim; His agony takes the form of guilt and compunction. He is doing penance; He is making confession; He is exercising contrition with a reality and a virtue infinitely greater than that of all saints and penitents together; for He is the one victim for us all, the sole satisfaction, the real penitent, all but the real sinner" (*Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, fifth edition, p. 340). All that is said in the text applies still more strongly to this extract.

representative repentance for the race, without an abuse of words, it is true that He offered a representative act of adhesion to the divine law, and of repudiation of the unrighteousness which transgressed it. That twofold act of adhesion and repudiation is the utterance to God of the true, eternal life of mankind; and thus the repentance of sinners expresses itself, for ever, to God in and through the sacrifice of Christ, by which they affirm their true life and repudiate the false. As the everlasting affirmation of the true life, the death of Christ is the perfect expression of the spiritual intention of those who, through repentance, abandon the false.

3. Again, our Lord's Atonement consists, we are told, in an expiatory confession. But why, we ask, must that confession be made in terms of suffering and death? And to this the answer is far from clear. The sufferings are said to be "the expression of the divine mind regarding our sins, and a manifestation by the Son of what our sins are to the Father's heart."[1] But these are the mental sufferings of our Lord when brought into contact with sin, and they are in themselves independent of the historical experiences which culminated in the endurance of the cross. Apparently, therefore, the tragedy of the cross is simply the *occasion* of the atoning response to God, the representative confession of sin, which satisfies the Father's mind. But the Scriptures, as we have seen, make the offering of Himself in death the essence of our Lord's Atonement, and not merely the accidental cause of evoking the confession, upon which Dr. M'Leod Campbell lays the whole stress. Not only therefore do we need clearer light,

[1] *The Nature of the Atonement*, p. 114.

as has been already shown, upon the imposition of these sufferings by the Father, but an explanation which will place them, however their significance may be construed, in a closer relation to the essential act of Atonement than the account before us supplies.

4. Again, the chief stress is laid upon a *declaration*: the perfect "Amen" or confession made to God on behalf of man. But surely the demand of God is for actual fulfilment rather than for declaration. Doubtless a rational being like man can only fulfil the divine law by first putting himself in spiritual union with it, and uttering to God that union. Confession is necessary to fulfilment, and fulfilment naturally expresses itself in the utterance of oneness with the mind of God. But it is the actual doing of God's will, both resulting from and ending in the confession that His will is good, which is of the principal importance. And if this be generally true, it is equally so of the satisfaction for transgression made by our Lord. The emphasis is on fulfilling, and not on confessing, all righteousness.

5. And, lastly, our Lord's dealing with God on behalf of men, so far as its retrospective aspect is concerned, is too exclusively treated as a response to God's condemnation of sin. This appears untrue both to the Scripture account and to the nature of the case. Our Lord's death, as we have seen,[1] was, historically speaking, due to fidelity to His Father. It was His supreme obedience to His Father which brought it about. His mental attitude must therefore find expression in the words, "Lo, I come to do Thy will." It is pre-eminently and in the first place a response to the demand of God for righteousness,

[1] Chap. ii.

and only in the second the response to the divine condemnation of sin. Dr. M'Leod Campbell recognises this as to our Lord's dealing with men on the part of God, but it is equally true of all aspects and offices of the Passion. The Atonement perfectly puts away sin, because it perfectly affirms all righteousness. If all this be true, we must conclude that while in this account we have a contribution of the greatest importance because of its insistence upon the spiritual nature of the Atonement, and its suggestions as to what that nature is, yet that it has failed, as is witnessed by its own admissions, to explain the whole of the facts, and, as a consequence, has to some extent distorted those very spiritual features upon which it has rightly laid much stress.

Frederick Denison Maurice

The account given by F. D. Maurice in his *Theological Essays* represents the positive and practical side, which appears subordinate in Dr. M'Leod Campbell. With Maurice self-surrender is the vital principle of the Atonement. Our Lord is revealed as making Himself one with us in our fallen condition, and, in that condition, fulfilling the will of God. It is on this ground that He is the object of complacency to His Father; and because He is "the true, sinless root of humanity" that complacency is extended to us, and is declared to us in the cross.

The leading passage is as follows:

"Supposing all these principles gathered together; supposing the Father's will to be a will to all good, the Son of God, being one with Him and Lord of man, to

obey and fulfil in our flesh that will by entering into the lowest condition into which men had fallen through their sin; supposing this Man to be for this reason an object of continual complacency to His Father, and that complacency to be fully drawn out by the death of the cross, is not this in the highest sense Atonement? Is not the true, sinless root of humanity revealed? is not God in Him reconciled to man? May not that reconciliation be proclaimed as a gospel to all men? Is not the cross the meeting-point between man and man, between man and God? Is not this meeting-point what men in all times and places have been seeking for? Did any find it till God declared it? And are not we bringing our understandings to the foot of the cross when we solemnly abjure all schemes and statements, however sanctioned by the arguments of divines, however plausible as implements of declaration, which prevent us from believing and proclaiming that in it all the wisdom and truth and glory of God were manifested to the creature; that in it man is presented as a holy and acceptable sacrifice to the Creator?"[1]

Here, it will be observed, there is no recognition of a penal element in Christ's sufferings. The condition into which Christ entered was brought about by sin, and increased the difficulty of obedience. That obedience had its final and crowning triumph in the cross. But no experience of death as the *punishment* of sin is involved. Nor is the death of Christ set forth as meeting a demand of God, the satisfaction of which is the prerequisite of forgiveness. That it is the object of the divine complacency is laid down, but that it is the indispensable

[1] Maurice, *Theological Essays*, p. 147.

condition of forgiveness is not stated. Indeed, the general tenor of Maurice's teaching is against such a view of the matter. The following quotation from his *Doctrine of Sacrifice* gives a satisfactory idea of his characteristic teaching on the subject. Speaking of the great passage on the divine propitiation in Romans iii., he says:

"The opening of the twenty-fifth verse at once explains the method of the apostle's teaching. '*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation.*' Try, if you can, to translate that language into the heathen notion of a propitiatory sacrifice. You want something to make God propitious or favourable to you. You wish you could find something mighty enough, transcendent enough, which you might be sure would have that effect. Does St. Paul follow out this line of thought? Does he say, 'The mighty, transcendent means of bringing God to be at peace with you is here'? No! but he introduces HIM as *setting forth* to us the one all-sufficient, all-satisfactory evidence that HE *has* made peace with us. Placing himself on the old Jewish ground, affirming that all good must come down from the Lord of all, that He must be the standard of righteousness, and the author of righteousness, to man, he raises that principle to its highest power; he affirms that the barrier between God and His creatures is removed freely without money and without price, and that the act of His Son in shedding His blood is the authentic declaration of that removal."[1] The propitiation is thus held to be the declaration and the evidence of a prior act of forgiveness on the part of God.

The whole object of the passage is to destroy the popular misapprehension which looked upon the Son as

[1] *The Doctrine of Sacrifice*, sermon ix., p. 152.

intervening to make the Father propitious towards sinners. It was necessary to make war upon this wholly unscriptural and misleading conception, but let us not do the recognised leaders of Evangelical thought the injustice of imputing this error to them. It is true that the Calvinists based upon the death of the Son a covenant made with Him by the Father to spare the elect, in virtue of His satisfaction. But *the Father* was the author of the whole arrangement, and the difficulty in the way of forgiveness lay, not in any want of mercy on the part of the Father, but in claims of justice which could not be denied.

Dr. Dale was entirely at one with Maurice in the main contention of the passage just quoted, as the following impressive statement will show: "The fact that at the impulse of His infinite mercy, and without any 'Atonement,' God has dismissed His personal resentment against our sinful race, that His love has triumphed over His moral indignation against our sins, lies at the very foundation of the Christian conception of the death of Christ."[1] The difference between the two is, that for Maurice the removal of this "personal resentment," or "moral indignation," destroyed the only obstacle outside men themselves to salvation, and the death of Christ did but declare this; whereas for those who regard the death of Christ strictly as a satisfaction, the mercy of God proves itself by meeting demands of righteousness, which otherwise would stand in the way of forgiveness. There is no difference, therefore, as to the Atonement taking its origin in mercy, and not itself originating mercy. The difference is as to the claims of the moral order, and

[1] Dale, *Christian Doctrine*, p. 247.

the way in which God in His mercy meets them on behalf of men. And as to this, Maurice comes some way, at least, towards meeting the common evangelical view by representing the death of Christ, in the extract just given, as the ground of the divine complacency towards mankind. And he witnesses to two important truths. First of all, our Lord throughout His course, and above all on the cross, is fulfilling and witnessing to the true life of man. Whatever else may be found in the Passion, this, above all, is there, and all else depends on it. And, secondly, our Lord is "the true, sinless root of humanity." What He does, humanity in a mystical sense does in and through Him; and what He does, He has the spiritual means, by the very constitution of humanity in Him, of reproducing in men. Their true life rests on and grows out of the apprehension of the Father's will as a "will to all good," and on self-surrender to Him.

Dr. Westcott

We may fitly notice Dr. Westcott's *Victory of the Cross* next in order, owing to the powerful influence which has been exerted upon him by both Dr. M'Leod Campbell and by F. D. Maurice. Dr. Westcott finds the foundation of the redemptive work of our Lord in the natural fellowship of men, and in the consequent power of sacrifice generally to uplift them. He proceeds to show that this power is pre-eminently present in the case of Christ, because humanity has its unity in Christ. Hence His life is universal in character and experience. "Christ, who took humanity to Himself, was able to fulfil the will of God

under the conditions of our present earthly life, both actively and passively, raising to its highest perfection every faculty of man, and bearing every suffering through which alone fallen man could attain his destiny." And "Christ, as the Head of humanity, was able to bring within the reach of every one who shares His nature the fruits of His perfect obedience, through the energy of the one life by which we all live. His sufferings were not outside us; they were not 'sufferings belonging to another being.' They were the sufferings of One in whom we live, and who lives in us." Hence the following four propositions are laid down:

"1. Christ exhausted all suffering, bearing it according to the will and mind of God.

"2. We, on our part, need the constant support of His present sympathy in our labours.

"3. Christ is able to communicate the virtue of His work, the reality of forgiveness, to all who are in Him.

"4. We, on our part, can even now, through every trial, realise His joy."

It is the first of these which chiefly concerns us. We are told that, in contrast to our stunted moral perceptions, "Christ in perfect sinlessness gave the power of a perfect estimate of sin. His temptations, His emotions, His prayers, His warnings, His judgments, His agony, show us His complete acceptance of the just, the inevitable sentence of God upon the sin of humanity, which He had taken to Himself; and they are, at the same time, a revelation of God's mode of dealing with sin, and of the willing surrender of the Son of man to His Father's discipline." Suffering, "which is welcomed with the response of love, when it is brought to us by the will of God,—love for the

Creator to whose purpose it answers, love for the creature to whose purifying it serves,—illuminates the whole course of this world. In this sense sufferings are a revelation of the Fatherhood of God, who brings back His children to Himself in righteousness and love. In this sense Christ suffered, knowing the nature of sin, knowing the judgment of God, realising in every pain the healing power of a Father's wisdom. And in this sense the virtue of His Passion remains in its eternal power." [1]

These extracts make it clear that Dr. Westcott apprehends the Atonement chiefly as discipline; for though the acceptance of the sentence on sin is noticed, the thought is scarcely developed. The Son of man surrenders Himself "to His Father's discipline"; sufferings are the means which God employs to bring back "His children to Himself in righteousness and love"; Christ realises "in every pain the healing power of a Father's wisdom." These are strong and, surely, unguarded phrases. Dr. M'Leod Campbell understood our Lord's response to turn aside the Father's wrath; Dr. Westcott understands it as perfecting Christ, and therefore because His union with us enables His energy to reach us, as perfecting us. It is the subjective influence of the sacrifice first upon Christ, and then on men, by which its end is interpreted. Nothing is said of its meeting a demand of God; indeed, it is significant that while righteousness, love, wisdom, healing, are all mentioned, no reference is made to wrath; the satisfaction is simply necessary in order to the perfecting of men. And not only of man generally, but, assuming the Incarnation, of our Lord Himself. Here it is that the language

[1] Westcott, *The Victory of the Cross*, pp. 79–83.

seems unguarded. How can it be said that our Lord needed the discipline which brings back God's children to Himself, the pain which is "the *healing* power of a Father's wisdom"? Healing implies sickness; bringing back is impossible without previous wandering. The failure to develop in the expiation the penal aspect of sufferings brings into fuller relief their disciplinary purpose; and then since they are so awful, and cannot be objectless, their office in perfecting our Lord is exaggerated to such an extent as to imperil the doctrine of His sinlessness, though probably Dr. Westcott is thinking rather of their effect upon us than upon Him.

Again, there is a lack of clearness about the statement that Christ was able to bring within reach of men "the fruits of His perfect obedience, through the energy of the one life by which we all live." The discipline of one man can affect another, not by the forthputting of energy, but either by the spiritual truths and forces which it reveals, or by the example which, since men are of kindred nature, inspires them and attracts their sympathy. Beyond this there can be no vicarious discipline. Nor does our Lord's unique relation to mankind enable us to conceive, or necessitate our believing in, any other kind of action of His sufferings upon us. It is through our spiritual nature that our Lord's sufferings influence us, and only by revelation and by sympathy can our spiritual nature be affected. It is owing to the constitution of human nature in Christ that we can be thus influenced by His sufferings. Beyond that every one must bear the burden of his own discipline. As long, then, as we see in the death of Christ the revelation

and working of the spiritual order, and can read off its truths, so long can it affect us, and so long can Christ by His response to that spiritual order awaken our sympathy and imitation. But exactly what our Lord's death *reveals* is left by Dr. Westcott in a haze; hence its influence, so far as intelligent apprehension is concerned, is decreased.

At the same time, Dr. Westcott points, it seems to me, to an important truth. Our Lord's sufferings do stand in a vital relation to His own perfecting, though their effect is not that of healing, or of bringing back to the Father. When we are told of the "Captain of our salvation" being made "perfect through sufferings," we must understand this, not of official perfecting, but of a perfecting of character in order to His priestly ministry. Our Lord's sufferings did stand in an organic relationship to Himself, or He would not have *suffered*; they did evoke a response in which lay the manifestation of His highest spiritual capabilities, and in the absence of those sufferings, such a manifestation, because uncalled for, would have been impossible. That manifestation draws out the sympathy, aspiration, and imitation of those who believe in Him, because of the one Spirit which is in Him and in them through Him. We must take account of that vital relationship of suffering to our Lord's perfection, under the conditions of the Incarnation in our explanation of the Atonement. We must admit that our Lord, sinless though He was, was not only the "root," but "the offspring of David," and as such received a nature which not only grew to its perfection, but needed discipline in order to its growth. His sufferings supplied that discipline. It was through His feeling them that He was

perfected by them. It was by His victory in, through, and over them, that He fulfilled all righteousness. But that victory was not only the means of His own and of our perfecting; it was, above all, the consummation, and constituted the merit, of His satisfaction to God for sin.

Dr. Bushnell

We must conclude this chapter by considering two writers who have been most strenuous opponents of any doctrine of satisfaction on account of sin, but whose treatment of the subject is remarkable for the suggestion of positive principles, to which justice must be done in any adequate theory of the Atonement. The first of these is Bushnell, whose *Vicarious Sacrifice* has exercised a wide and powerful influence. The second is Ritschl.

To those who know the two books, it is clear that Bushnell's *Vicarious Sacrifice* was constantly before Dr. Dale's mind when he wrote his lectures on *The Atonement.* Among other marks of that influence may be mentioned Dr. Dale's treatment of the relationship of our Lord's death to the law. Bushnell asserts Dr. Samuel Clarke's doctrine of the independence of law, and argues against the usual statement of God's demand for satisfaction. Dr. Dale accepts the view that the law is independent, alike of the will and of the character of God, though declining to follow Bushnell in making God the first subject of law, and then seeks to state the doctrine of satisfaction in such a way as to raise it above the range of Bushnell's objections.

Bushnell's writings are full of both spiritual and

intellectual power. It may fairly be said that no work on our subject contains a greater wealth of material which must be used in building up a comprehensive account of the Atonement, and that none presents with greater force the criticisms which may be urged against the usual presentation of the doctrine of satisfaction. It seems strange in reading him that he himself should have missed attaining to a solution, which would at once have made use of the materials he had gathered round him while escaping the difficulties he had so vigorously pointed out. At times he seems about to do so; but as we proceed we shall find that there were powerful causes which put such a solution beyond his reach.

Bushnell's leading principle is "that love itself is an essentially vicarious principle."[1] "Given the universality of love, the universality of vicarious sacrifice is given also."[2] Thus the sacrifice of Christ is but the supreme example of that which all true love is always doing according to the measure of its power. This position is expounded at great length, and with abundance of illustration.[3]

In the next place, Bushnell lays down that our Lord, by His saving work, and especially by His obedience unto death, did honour to the law. "It is obvious enough," he says, "that in such a way of obedience Christ makes a contribution of honour to the law. He obeys; that will do more to enthrone it in our reverence than all the desecrations of sin have done to pluck it down—more too,

[1] *Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 11. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[3] As Dr. Orr well points out (*Christian View of God and the World*, p. 350), this "removes the work of Christ from that unique and exceptional position which the Scriptures constantly ascribe to it." For all vicarious suffering becomes, according to its degree, redemptive.

than all conceivable punishment, to make it felt, and keep it in respect. The grand evil of sin is, that it tramples law and brings it into contempt. Many, too, apprehend danger from the full remission of sin, lest it should leave the law trampled and without vindication, and reveal a kind of indifference to it in God that will be fatal to all due impressions of its authority and sanctity. Here, then, over against all such dangers and apprehended mischief of laxity, we now place the momentous, grandly impressive, fact of Christ's obedience—His obedience unto death—taken as an exhibition of God's eternal homage to law, and of the cross of sacrifice by which His feeling and will are everlastingly bowed to the burdens of pity and suffering."[1] The honour done to the law by Christ is described later on as consisting (1) in the inclusion of "full recovery to the law" in the remission of sins; (2) in the fact that His sacrifice is as much "for the resanctification of the law as for our recovery"; (3) in that the law is incarnated in His Incarnation, and thereby brought home to men's feelings and convictions; and (4), lastly, in His own obedience to it, which is indeed a revelation before the eyes of mankind "of God's own everlasting obedience."[2]

Further, Bushnell recognises our Lord's subjection to the curse. "Christ," he says, "is entered practically into the condition of evil and made subject to it. This condition, too, of evil we shall find is, in some very important sense, a penal condition. It is what is called, in one of the epistles, 'the curse.'"[3] This he explains as follows: "To us the effects of sin are its curse, and the laws of retribution, set in deep and firm in the economy of nature

[1] *Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 259. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 265. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 324.

itself, are God's appointed ministers of justice." Hence, on the entrance of sin, "a shock of discord runs through the general framework of life and experience,"[1] and a state of corporate evil is the result. His conclusion is: "Now this state of corporate evil is what the Scriptures call the curse, and it is directly into this that Christ is entered by His Incarnation. In this taking of the flesh He becomes a true member of the race, subject to all the corporate liabilities of His bad relationship. The world is now to Him just what it is to us; save that the retributive causations reach Him only in a public way, and never as a sufferer on His own account. He is even depravated or damaged in His human constitution just so far as that constitution is humanly derivative."[2]

Once more, Bushnell insists on the reinstatement involved in forgiveness. He says that the sinner "must *be* forgiven; the forgiveness must be executed by an inward change that takes him out of his bondages and the hell of penal causations caused by his sin, and brings him forth into the liberties of love and adoption. This will be effected by the grace of Christ in His vicarious sacrifice. And then the question follows, How the forgiveness, the real deliverance accomplished by Him, may consist with the precept, and the enforcements of law, and the rectoral justice of God? No *ground* of forgiveness is wanted, but only that the forgiveness itself be executed in a way to save all the great interest of eternal authority and government."[3]

But Bushnell opposes any doctrine of satisfaction to divine justice in order to forgiveness, and presses against

[1] *Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 325. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 325, 326. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 245.

it the ordinary arguments which have been used against the substitution of the innocent for the guilty. For him these range themselves under two impossible alternatives. Either they "make Christ other than God, that He may offer something to God's justice, and then a divine Person (God), that He may be able to offer what is sufficient, and then, again, human, that the divine may not suffer"; or "the satisfaction made is wholly *ab intra*, or within the divine nature itself." And as to this latter he remarks: "What kind of power any ruler must hold who, to make sure of justice, takes all his punishment out of himself, it is not difficult to see."[1]

More powerful, however, than particular objections to influence Bushnell to reject any doctrine of satisfaction are his view that the law is independent of God, his doctrine of the function of the wrath of God and its relation to His love, and his failure to take sufficiently into account the human result of the Incarnation and the Godward relationship of the man Christ Jesus.

As to the first, according to Bushnell the eternal law is independent of God, who is its first subject, and it is prior to His instituted government.[2] The latter was instituted when men, created to obey the eternal law, fell into sin. In such a state of the case, what will God do? He will, Bushnell says, "regard Himself as elected by His own transcendent powers of will and working to assume the charge of a ruler, and will institute government, contriving by what assertions of authority, supported by what measures, He may reinforce the impersonal law, and repair its broken sway."[3] "Nor," he further states, "is it a

[1] *Vicarious Sacrifice*, pp. 317, 318. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 186. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 194.

matter very widely different, that He will undertake the redemption of the fallen races; for He can hardly do for the law broken down all that He would, without recovering the disobedient to their full homage and allegiance. Besides, they are fellow natures with Himself, and the righteous love He bears them will unite Him to their fallen state in acts of tenderest sacrifice. And so the instituted government and the redeeming sacrifice will begin together, at the same date and point, and work together for very nearly the same purpose."[1] Thus, both divine government and redemption are instituted to repair the failure of the eternal law. They represent two perfectly independent though complementary influences, working for the same end; namely, the recovery of sinners to allegiance to the law. Hence, because the law is independent of God, and because the government and the redemptive grace of God are two parallel methods of divine action, neither of which is derived from the other, therefore the forgiveness of sins "is a purely personal matter,"[2] and the idea of satisfaction is out of place.

This conclusion is strengthened by the view taken by Bushnell of the wrath of God. He says "that there is a deep wrath-principle in God, as in all moral natures. . . . But this combustion of right anger, this wrath-impulse, so fearfully moved, is no law to God certainly, requiring Him to execute just what will exhaust the passion. It is only that guiding power of justice that puts Him on the work of redress, and that armature of strength upon His feeling that enables Him to inflict pain without shrinking. And then, just at this point, comes in another function equally

[1] *Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 194. [2] Bushnell's *Forgiveness and Law*, p. 93.

necessary, namely, wisdom, courage, administrative reason, which directs the aim, tempers the degree, and regulates the measures and times of the pain."[1] Bushnell points out, and rightly, that it is a misconception to "assume the essential priority of law and justice, as related to mercy."[1] "They are to be co-factors in the operation of a government that undertakes, for its object, the reconciliation of fallen men to God."[2]

And, lastly, Bushnell's position is fortified by his failure to do justice to the result of the Incarnation. He opposes the view of those who regard our Lord's obedience, "never as the obedience of God Himself to the eternal, necessary law, but as being that of a certain Second Person, who is, somehow, other and not God, contributed by Him to God for sinners."[3]

Brief consideration must be given to each of these three points.

It is somewhat difficult for us nowadays to put ourselves in close enough contact with the first position to be able to criticise it, and for this very reason it is needless to devote any lengthened consideration to a conception which no longer has vital significance. To conceive of the eternal law as independent of God, of God as its first subject, of the institution of His government as an accident due to transgression, of His positive law as a mere external authority set up solely in restraint of sin, and of His mercy as working side by side with His government but not as its source, offends us by its multiplication of principles and by the external and accidental relations in which the factors of redemption stand both to one another

[1] *Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 219. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 222. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 257.

and to man. To represent law as independent of God, and as regnant in unfallen man apart from the authority of God, is to dethrone God, although His deposition (in thought) is masked by speaking of the eternal law as the "all-regulative moral idea of right, which, to simply think, is to be put in everlasting obligation."[1] As thus represented, the supremacy of the law in sinless man would indeed be owing to the act of God in creation, for there would have been no human subjects of the law had He not created them; but when He had created them, the law would owe nothing to His authority, for it would reign as an all-regulative idea, inherent in spirits by the very nature and necessity of things, quite apart from any ordering of God. God is therefore simply a demiurge. And His government, when instituted, is but an expedient; He sets up a positive law in "statutes and judgments," because the eternal law has failed. This position can be maintained with any plausibility only by first limiting the positive government of God to the Mosaic legislation, and then by uprooting the latter from the eternal moral order (as realising itself in mankind), out of which it sprang, in order to plant it in the will of God, working, indeed, in allegiance to the moral order, but externally to it. To state such a view is to condemn it. And, finally, to leave the justice and mercy of God, working side by side to restore the supremacy of the law, as unrelated principles in independence of one another, is to destroy the primacy of love as the spring of the divine action.

The way in which Bushnell treats the wrath of God is

[1] *Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 188.

equally open to serious criticism. He imputes to God an impulsive, indeed an explosive, wrath-principle, arising in Him as it does in men, needing to be directed and tempered by wisdom in Him as in them, and, as an impulse, not entitled to complete satisfaction. But such an account is unsatisfactory, if given of the wrath of man; much more so, if applied to the wrath of God. Wrath and its explosive manifestation are not to be confounded with one another. The latter is no measure of the former. It is instinctive rather than reflective, varies according to temperament rather than according to character, is as often aroused for unrighteous as for righteous ends. Even where wrath is aroused on moral grounds, its impulsive outbursts may grow less, while its force may be increased rather than diminished thereby. The impulse may not claim satisfaction; the sustained principle may. And when we speculate as to the divine nature, it seems improper to ascribe to God impulses which need to be brought under the control of wisdom. Impulses generally, and, still more, impulses needing to be controlled, are the mark of the finite creature, and not of the Creator. They are the manifestations of a nature received and of habits built up, over which the individual is not at each moment supreme. But in God, wisdom, regnant and explicit, is immanent in His wrath, and makes impulsiveness impossible. Hence the wrath of God, when rightly understood, is the measure of His righteous demand. It is the synonym of His intense and abiding opposition to moral transgression and shortcoming, and to sinners, so far as they make themselves one with these. Love and wrath are united in the demand that all righteousness be

fulfilled. The wrath can be propitiated only by the satisfaction of the love.

Lastly, Bushnell construes the work of redemption, as we have seen, exclusively as the manifestation of God in redemptive dealing with men. The result of the Incarnation is the revelation of the love of God bearing the burdens of men. But the Incarnation is the entrance into humanity of the Son of God; its result is the appearance of the *Man* Christ Jesus. The foundation of His life is in its Godward relationship, His perfect Sonship, and in the spirit of self-surrender in which His Sonship expresses itself. This Godward relationship is not only real, but primary; and the unfolding of it fills the gospels. Whatever side may be left out, the human, with its Godward attitude, cannot be ignored by any one who reads the gospel narratives. Had, then, that Godward life of the incarnate Son no representative function on behalf of men? To deny it is practically to ignore His manhood, in order to glorify His Godhead; it is to refuse to allow its due weight to the fact that our Lord stands before God as the Son, entering into His presence on behalf of men This ideal Man, realising perfectly as head of the human race the true relationship to the Father, is never portrayed by Bushnell; and, consequently, his account of redemption entirely passes by this aspect of the Incarnation and its results. The obedience of Christ is the homage of God to the eternal law, not the self-surrender of the divine Son of man to the Father. At every point this is a travesty of the teaching of the New Testament.

Yet, apart from the service which his powerful criticism of what is untenable in various doctrines of satis-

faction has rendered, Bushnell has made two valuable contributions to a full apprehension of the means and method of the Atonement. He has brought into relief how close and necessary is the connexion between love and sacrifice, thus making our Lord's work on our behalf the natural and spontaneous outcome of His love, measuring its reality and intensity. To bear this in mind is to be kept clear of all interpretations which savour of artificiality. And he has drawn attention to the condition into which our Lord entered by the Incarnation, the full meaning and force of which was revealed on the cross. Scripture calls this the curse. The meaning of our Lord's entrance into it needs to be more carefully explained. Bushnell is led away from a satisfactory conclusion by attributing what he calls the "quasi-justice" of the curse, in other words, its retributive characteristics, to "self-acting laws," apart from the immediate volition of God. Here, as in other parts of his account, he separates what should be joined together. The relation of the curse to the mind and will of God, to His righteousness, should have been investigated. This subject will occupy us in the next chapter. Meanwhile, it is enough to say that the penal sufferings of the cross must have their explanation in the conditions of the Incarnation, of which they are the completed result.

Bushnell himself became conscious, to a certain extent, of the shortcomings of the view expounded in *Vicarious Sacrifice*, and published an additional account in 1874, entitled *Forgiveness and Law*. This latter work is rather, however, a supplement than a revision, for all the fundamental positions of the *Vicarious Sacrifice* remain. But

Bushnell came to feel it necessary to place the sacrifice of our Lord in a closer relation to the determining of God to show mercy to sinners than he had hitherto done. This he attempts by means of "the grand analogy, or almost identity, that subsists between our moral nature and that of God," which he understands as involving "that our moral pathologies and those of God make faithful answer to each other, and He is brought so close to us that almost anything that occurs in the workings or exigencies of our moral instincts may even be expected in His."[1] The application of this analogy is as follows: True forgiveness is no mere letting of the offender go, and is no mere act of will. He who forgives takes the offender to his heart. "And in order to this, two things are necessary: first, such a sympathy with the wrongdoing party as virtually takes his nature; and, secondly, a making cost in that nature by suffering, or expense, or painstaking sacrifice and labour."[1] This twofold necessity is attributed to God, in order that His wrath may be removed. In the Incarnation and cross He "makes cost" for mankind, and thus His forgiveness is brought about.

This addition needs only a word. It owes any plausibility it may have to a confusion between personal resentment and righteous indignation; and even in the case of personal resentment, the forgiveness precedes the bearing cost, and gives rise to it. It is the *emotional result* of resentment which remains, and is overborne by the bearing cost. This state of the emotions does undoubtedly give way only as the new state of mind works itself out into all its practical consequences, with their

[1] *Forgiveness and Law*, p. 34.

appropriate emotional effects. But the emotional effects and the manifestation of anger are not to be confused with the anger itself; and still less are the difficulties which we experience in dealing with our emotions to be ascribed to God.

Ritschl

We pass, lastly, to the account of Albrecht Ritschl, contained in his *Justification and Atonement*, which needs careful examination. One of the most remarkable phenomena of recent theological thought in Germany is the rapid spread of the influence of Ritschl. His system of thought is a strange combination of philosophical agnosticism with pietism; and, as an attempt to keep the life of religion without its transcendental affirmations, it appeals strongly to the large class who, while their confidence in a theological interpretation of the world is speculatively shaken, yet feel intense cravings for fellowship with God, and a firm conviction that the satisfaction of those cravings is to be found in Christ. Such find themselves in the strange difficulty that they can neither commit themselves to trust in the validity of the results attained by the reason in its efforts to explain the universe, nor can they dismiss Christ, and the religious life which emanates from Him, as an unsubstantial dream. To these Ritschl offers the means of maintaining at once their speculative agnosticism and their practical pietism; and the attempt is the more specious because of the profoundly religious spirit in which he treats of Christ, and the even too narrow way in which he restricts all revelation of God to that which has come historically

from Christ. Already there are signs of the extension of influences, either directly derived from Ritschl or due to similar spiritual conditions, to British theology. This increases the necessity to study him carefully, especially as we shall find that, both by his criticism and by his constructive thought, he brings to light principles which must find expression in any satisfactory doctrine of the Atonement.

The source of all knowledge of God is, according to Ritschl, found in the consciousness of Christ, and that of the ethical community founded by Christ and standing in living relationship to Him.[1] The Christian cannot find the knowledge of God in either pre-Christian or non-Christian religions; and the truly Christian method of procedure is the precise opposite of that of scholastic theology. The latter, by virtue of its Aristotelian spirit, starts with the concept of pure, undefined Being, and building up its idea of God by the addition of attributes, ends in either Deism or Pantheism. The Christian consciousness, on the other hand, starts from experience, and recognises the attributes of God only as, and so far as, they are involved in that experience.[2]

But we must not make any mistake as to the character of the knowledge which results from Christian experience. It consists, not in theoretic or world-knowledge, but in so called "judgments of value." The postulates which are necessary to the constitution of religious experience have validity so far as that experience is concerned, but not beyond it. For example, Christ, as the author of our

[1] *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, vol. iii., p. 259.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., pp. 215, 216.

redemption, effects so great a work, and stands in so unique a relation to our spiritual life, that He thereby establishes His claim to divine honours in the worship of the Church. But to proceed to attribute to Him divinity, independently of what He is *to us*, and thence to deduce His pre-existence and other divine qualities as facts valid for world knowledge, is to utter propositions which are not only unproved, but meaningless, as going beyond the possible range of our knowledge. In pursuance of this view, Ritschl discusses at length the sense in which divine attributes may be ascribed to Christ.[1]

It is clear from this, that the starting-point of Ritschl's system is his philosophical position. Indeed, the introduction to his book is occupied with an attempt to establish the necessity of a metaphysical foundation to any theology. We must glance, therefore, at the philosophical pre-suppositions upon which the Ritschlian theology is based. Speaking roughly, they may be said to be Kantian, modified somewhat by the influence of Lotze. According to Kant, as is well known, the whole material of knowledge is found in sensations, which are received according to the forms of the sensibility, subsumed under the categories of the understanding, and regulated by the ideas of the pure reason,—self, the world, God. Thus in the finished product—knowledge—the only element which is not supplied by the subject is the crude material of sensation. Yet while these three ideas are necessary subjectively, they have no claim to be treated as objectively true; that is, as representing realities independent of our cognitive faculties. But what Kant expelled from objec-

[1] *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, vol. iii., pp. 412–455.

tive knowledge, so far as the pure reason is concerned, he brought back by means of the practical reason, as necessarily involved in the moral constitution of human nature. The general veracity of the moral nature being assumed, what was necessary to it was thereby entitled to be received as true. Akin to this is the distinction drawn by Ritschl and Hermann between theoretic or world-knowledge and religious knowledge.

Again, Ritschl professes to accept Lotze's theory of cognition.[1] But he alters it in accepting it, as Stähelin has well shown.[2] According to Lotze, we have no knowledge of things except through the subjective phenomena which they produce in us, and our knowledge of things in themselves is derived by inference from these subjective phenomena. But he allows, or rather contends for, the validity of such inference; whereas Ritschl denies it, under the influence of Kant. Hence it follows, according to him, that what is subjectively valid as given in experience is not objectively valid as a guide to the nature of things, independently of our experience of them. The bearing of this upon Ritschl's theology is apparent. The deliverances of the religious consciousness are valid for that consciousness. As contained in and necessary to it, they command assent; but when, separated from it, they are treated as supplying material for theoretic knowledge, they are pressed beyond their proper limit and lead us astray. Man can know God only in and through revelation, and that revelation is so strictly relative to us that we can never attain to any knowledge of Him in Himself as apart from and before the

[1] *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, vol. iii., pp. 19, 20.

[2] Stähelin, *Kant, Lotze, and Ritschl* (English trans.), pp. 166–182.

revelation. This is true of all the attributes which we predicate of God; even personality can only be said to belong to Him because it is involved in this subjective revelation. We can say nothing of His personality before He determined Himself in revelation as love.[1]

The revelation of God is made to us in and through the relation in which He stands to His Son and to the ethical community—the Church—founded by His Son.[2] This revelation is that He is love, the will of love.[3] This idea of God as love demands as its correlate the kingdom of God, the ethical community in which the love of God is manifest and upon which it spends itself, and the world which serves as the means of the development of that community.[4] God is seen to be love as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and of the ethical community in and through Christ. Only in these is His love manifested, and they are essential to its realisation.[5] And the love of God consists just in this, that He identifies Himself with the end of the existence of this community; that is to say, God realises Himself only in and through the realisation of the end of the community. The fulfilment of God's self-end is through the world-end.[6] In this way Ritschl takes credit to himself for avoiding the opposite extremes of Deism and Pantheism. The self-determination of God as the "will of love" saves Him from the externality, the

[1] *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, vol. iii., pp. 217, 226, 227, 268.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 259.
[3] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 260.
[4] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., pp. 262, 263.
[5] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 269.
[6] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., pp. 258, 268. In this connexion Ritschl criticises the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, that God's end transcends the world-end, on the ground that if this be so, the selection of the world-end, as that which is to be realised, would be arbitrary.

mechanical relation to the world, which is the weakness of Deism, for the world is vital to love; and, on the other hand, the pantheistic conclusion is equally impossible, for personality is essential to love.[1] On the ground of these inner and necessary relations subsisting between God and the world, Ritschl condemns all views upon which the ordinary doctrine of satisfaction is based, whether the mediæval conception of God's sovereignty, as founded on might and arbitrary will, and as giving Him private rights against His creatures,[2] or the later conception of public and governmental rights, according to which God is held to be bound to punish sin in the interests of the order of the universe. He opposes this latter conception for the following four reasons: (1) To ascribe "a necessity to God, which is not conditioned by His will, but is deduced from an essential natural characteristic, betokens Him as a finite and becoming personality."[3] (2) Law is the *means* of ethical conduct, securing each member of the community freedom to work out his ethical ends. Law therefore is both narrower than and subordinate to ethics. It belongs to a lower sphere, and must not be made the standard of God's dealings with men, which are ethical, and not legal.[4] (3) The conception that God is necessitated to punish sin, shows how illegitimately human analogies are extended to the conduct of God. Evil being what hinders the realisation of man's ends, punishment is relatively necessary in human affairs in order to protect liberty and property. But this necessity does not apply to God.[5] (4) Lastly,

[1] *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, vol. iii., pp. 215, 216.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., pp. 227 *seq.*
[3] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., pp. 238, 239.
[4] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., pp. 239–242.
[5] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., pp. 243 *seq.*

the idea of such a twofold retribution is untrue of the Christian religion, which teaches us that God "maketh His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth His rain on the just and on the unjust," commanding us also to love our enemies.[1]

The Atonement is therefore a subjective change in the hearts of men. The realisation of the ethical community, which is the correlate and the object of God's love, depends upon the attainment by men of the spirit of Christ.[2] That spirit has the two distinctive features of trustful dependence upon God and consequent spiritual mastery of the world; a mastery which is most clearly manifest in the unflinching fidelity with which Christ entered into and endured the sufferings to which He was exposed. Herein lies the atoning power of Christ, that through His life, His teaching, and His death men are brought to this spirit. The victory of our Lord's faith and fidelity over death invests Him with the spiritual lordship of the world.[3] Through Him the life of Sonship is revealed, and the triumph of the filial spirit in His death inspires a like faith in the hearts of His disciples; His work is the everlasting spring of this consciousness, and the personal relationship to Christ never becomes superfluous. It is through relationship to the Christian community—the Church—that men attain to this fellowship with Christ.[4] By the attainment on the part of men to Christ's spirit, the end of God is on its way to realisation. The great obstacle which lies in the way of this

[1] *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, vol. iii., p. 247.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., pp. 270–276.
[3] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 426.
[4] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., pp. 573, 574.

realisation is the sense of guilt, with the apprehension of God's wrath and of impending punishment, which is conveyed by it.[1] And this the revelation of God's will of love in Christ removes. The sense of guilt is therefore, to all intents and purposes, an illusion based upon a misapprehension, and the work of Christ is directed to remove this misapprehension. His work makes no alteration in the objective relations of God to sinners, but only enables them to be clearly apprehended, with the result that dread and distrust are removed.

The Christ who effects this spiritual revolution, according to Ritschl, establishes thereby His claim to divine honours in the worship of the Church, which owes its salvation to Him.[2] But to affirm that He is eternally divine, or, in a literal sense, pre-existent, or actually supreme in the natural universe, is to utter propositions which are meaningless, because they go beyond the possible range of our experience.[3] This is the explanation of the emphasis laid by Ritschl upon the Church as being the vehicle for the reception of the Spirit of Christ, an emphasis which, at first sight, seems strange as coming from one who constantly boasts of himself as leading a Church, wandering amid abstractions, back to Luther. Christ having passed away to unknown regions, so far as His actual presence is concerned, can only exert a spiritual influence upon men through the community which preserves the tradition of His life and teaching, and therefrom derives the spirit in which Christ lived and died.

Such is a brief outline of Ritschl's account. It is clear

[1] *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, vol. iii., pp. 491 *seq.*
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., pp. 367 *seq.* [3] *Ibid.*, vol. iii., pp. 412, 455.

that it represents a bold attempt to preserve and to justify the spiritual experiences of Christians, not in face of a philosophy which is diametrically opposed to them, but on the basis of that philosophy, with the inevitable result that facts preserved by so strange a method are fatally weakened and painfully distorted in the process. It is necessary to give brief consideration to the view here presented of the relations of religious consciousness to objective reality, to the exposition of the general content of the revelation of God in Christ, and to the particular objections taken to all forms of satisfaction by Atonement for sin.

As to the first,—Ritschl's doctrine of cognition and its application to religion,—it is possible to hold that knowledge must come to us by way of subjective experience, and yet to maintain, in the fullest sense, its objective truth. Neither space nor our present concern will permit of any full treatment of the subject here. But the perverse result of the Kantian theory of cognition is that the more perfect our apparatus for arriving at knowledge, the more complete is our disqualification for attaining to truth. Each stage of our progress only walls us in more securely from the very object which we seek. The conclusion is the more vexatious, because while building barriers against reality, we are instinctively persuaded that we are throwing them down; and because it is just when we are rejoicing in the possession of the knowledge which we have sought, that reflection comes to prove to us that our acquirement is nothing worth. It amounts practically to this, that our knowledge is no key to reality, because it is *we* that know.[1]

[1] See Professor Seth's *Scottish Philosophy* for an admirable discussion of this question.

It may safely be said, that when a philosophy leads to such a conclusion, it is the philosophy which will have to be revised, and not the distinctive certitude of consciousness which will have to give way. In the long run, the healthy conviction that our reason is intended to lead us to knowledge of reality, and not to shut us out from it, must prevail, and men will believe that what is essential to knowledge is so because it is a revelation of truth. Even Kant had to make a road out of the *impasse* into which his *Critique of the Pure Reason* had led him, and in so doing to supply materials for the destruction of his previous critical conclusions. For it is but a step first from the recognition of the necessity of God for the moral consciousness to the discovery of His presence in the intellectual. Philosophy must accommodate itself to the data of consciousness, and must not, in order to a premature completeness, rule out the very facts it has to explain.

So of the religious application made by Ritschl. By all means let us seek our knowledge of God in Christ and the Christian consciousness. Here, indeed, it is to be found in its completeness, and only here. In doing so, however, a double enlargement must be made. It is impossible to exclude the testimony of either the pre-Christian or the non-Christian consciousness, as Ritschl does. For, in the first place, such exclusion suggests the question, By what right are Christ and His followers selected, and the rest left? to answer which satisfactorily, a criticism of the relative degrees of veracity to be found in the Christian, pre-Christian, and non-Christian religions must be attempted—a task impossible on the principles of Ritschl. And, in the second place, the testimony of Christ

and His followers is most impressive, as being characteristically and ideally human, the perfect and final expression of the natural "testimony of the human soul."

And, further, not only are Christ and His followers in relation to man, but man is in relation to the natural world which he perceives, and in perception constitutes. His experience of God, therefore, will concern not only his own spiritual necessities, but necessarily the universe, of which he is part, and from which he can never isolate himself. In virtue of this organic relation of man to the world, that which man discovers of God is a discovery not only for part of his nature—its spiritual needs—but for the whole; and not only for his own nature, but for the universe, which finds its unity in him. Hence the fear to extend to the world the truth which is essential to ourselves, or to carry back to God, as He is in Himself, the disclosures of Himself which He makes to us for our salvation, is both irrational and morbid. For example, if God reveals Himself to us in a way that involves personality, we should not hesitate to conclude that this is because, quite apart from us, He possesses personality. If Christ be God relatively to us, we should infer that this can only be because He is essentially, and therefore eternally and universally, divine. And, once more, if in the solemn consciousness of guilt, we are apprised of God's wrath against sin, and warned of His intention to punish it, we should treat it as a communication from Him to be laid to heart, and not as a human illusion to be airily dismissed. It seems child's play, however well-intentioned, to endeavour to uphold Christian experience on other terms than these.

Again, Ritschl's account of the content of the revelation of God in Christ is equally open to criticism. The "will of love" is substituted as an equivalent for "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." But the former expression is narrower than the latter, not only by the omission of the specific relationship set forth by Fatherhood, but also because, when that relationship is obscured, the only spiritual faculty left is will. And thus the infinite wealth of the divine nature, as expressed in Fatherhood, is impoverished. Moreover, the ground and guarantee of the love of God, which is to be found in the eternal relations of the Father and the Son, being dismissed by Ritschl, he is left to understand God's love as consisting in His determination to realise His own self-end in and through the realisation of the end of the ethical community—the Christian Church. But this account of the matter, if we accept it as it stands, goes far to destroy both the independence of the divine life and the reality of the divine love. If it is only in and through mankind that God comes to self-realisation, then we are necessary to Him, and He has no fulness of spiritual life apart from us. In that case, the very essence of love is destroyed, for "love seeketh not her own things," even in and through the things of others. Ritschl might perhaps answer that this is an incorrect inference, the proof of God's love towards us being that, with other ways of realising Himself open to Him, He chose this one.[1] But this answer is unsatisfactory. If God, instead of being eternally and

[1] Ritschl's criticism of Thomas Aquinas for teaching that God's end transcends the world's end does not preclude him from making this answer, for *ex hypothesi* when God has determined to realise Himself in a particular way, that way actualises completely the end of the divine nature.

absolutely perfect, is to realise Himself, it appears necessary that He should have an adequate object, "a kingdom," by means of which to manifest Himself. The preference of one kind of kingdom before another may, perhaps, be a mark of His love towards that which is selected; but some kingdom He must have for His own self-end, and with that personal necessity the essential spirit of love is wounded, if not destroyed. The whole position, indeed, is self-contradictory, unless the manifestation of God is held to have proceeded from an arbitrary haphazard, which negatives both will and love, understood in any intelligible sense. For by the hypothesis, God determines to realise Himself in and through men, as beings of a particular kind. But that determination involves preference, and power to realise what is preferred. But preference is an act of choice which is the manifestation of character. And hence the character which God determines to realise in the ethical community He already possesses in Himself.

The doctrine of Ritschl in this matter is a powerful illustration of the difficulties in which Unitarianism is at present placed. The old mechanical views of the relation of God to the world are fast giving way. They are recognised as resting upon abstractions as to the nature of God, of men, and of the universe which are not only untrue to the facts, but inherently impossible. Belief in the immanence of God balances, and sometimes overbalances, belief in His transcendence. Moreover, the religious consciousness imperatively demands that the relations between God and man should not be conceived as those of pure externality, and that the well-being of man should not be represented as being possibly a matter of

indifference to the satisfaction of God. All the harder does it become speculatively to make good the independent reality, personality, moral perfection of God, above all His eternal and essential love, except on the ground of the Trinitarian doctrine of the Godhead. Hence it is that the teaching of the Gospel of St. John, and of the later Pauline epistles, is no mere theoretic discussion of the nature of the Godhead, but is treated as standing in the closest connexion with the facts and necessities of Christian experience. And hence one of the most powerful motives of the great Trinitarian controversy was, as is clear from the writings of Athanasius, while safeguarding the transcendence of God to satisfy the religious sense of His immanence and organic relation to the world, constituted in the Son, and inhabited by His Spirit. It is, indeed, in "the truth as it is in Jesus" that we have the satisfaction and the reconciliation of the different elements which Ritschl recognises and seeks to meet. The eternal Sonship manifest in the incarnate Christ satisfies the side which Ritschl brings into prominence not only while, but because it satisfies the side which his view so seriously imperils. The eternal Sonship of our Lord is the condition and the guarantee of the eternal love of God, and therein of the absolute, immanent perfection of the divine life. But Sonship is not merely a reflection back upon the Godhead, in the eternal fellowship of love, but a revelation of the Godhead in external manifestation. The Son of God, whose presence "in the bosom of the Father" assures the eternal perfection of the Godhead, has "declared" the Father, as His Word, identifying His self-end with the world-end, to use Ritschl's phrase, without endangering

either His own eternal life or His essential love. Accept the Christian doctrine of the Godhead, and justice is naturally done to all those aspects of the truth which Ritschl puts in the forefront. Reject it, and the prominence of those aspects is obtained by a speciously concealed surrender of the very conditions of their reality, and, eventually, nothing will remain save the Pantheism from which Ritschl endeavours to deliver us.

We must now pass on to consider the special objections raised by Ritschl to the explanation of the Atonement as a satisfaction required by God.

The first position which he takes up is that a necessity based upon nature, unconditioned by will, can apply only to a finite and becoming personality. But this statement betrays a manifest confusion of thought. The finitude of any personality is indicated not by its possessing characteristics, but by its derivation from and dependence upon another, by its responsibility to another for self-realisation, and by its being conditioned by other personalities and by an impersonal environment in the task of self-realisation. A necessity *imposed upon* God, if an impossible conception may for a moment be allowed, would, of course, destroy His absoluteness, but not so a necessity of His own nature. Nor does the infinity contained in the conception of God as the unbounded sea of all possibilities, determined to this or that of these possibilities by bare will, seem worth contending for. A prior indefinite is not necessary to a present infinite. Nor is the indefinite akin to the real infinite. The only sense in which God can properly be called infinite is that He eternally possesses all possible perfections in an unlimited degree.

The second argument of Ritschl, that the relations between God and man are ethical, that ethics belong to a higher realm than law and government, and that therefore legal and governmental necessities cannot be treated as the supreme grounds of the divine action, must be pronounced correct. It is a main purpose of this book to contend for this view. But it does not follow from this that in ethics a command is not involved. Moreover, the ethical ends which each individual has to work out are determined, not by his own nature abstracted from all relations with other beings, but by his own nature in the actual relations which exist between him and other beings, and pre-eminently between him and God. Law and government are inadequate to express the dealings of God with men, because the relationship in which He stands to them is both higher and more intimate than those between a lawgiver or governor and his subjects. Ritschl's ultimate agnosticism disables him from investigating those relations as the objectively real basis upon which the ethical nature of mankind is based. And thus the matter is left undetermined. Enough is said to show the untrustworthiness of statements based upon legal and governmental analogies, but no attempt is made to bring out the relations between God and men as distinctly personal relations, and to inquire what those personal relations involve.

Hence, in the next place, the haste with which Ritschl assumes that God is not necessitated to punish sin. Men, in seeking their ends, need the protection which punishment affords against offenders. But on what ground can we affirm that God does not need to use punishment in order to attain His ends in such a world as He has constituted?

Only surely on ground which both minimises the relative independence of man and makes light of existing moral distinctions. If sin, as existing, is not hateful to God, so that He is content to tolerate it, and if personal independence as against Him is such an illusion that He can, consistently with the human nature which He has constituted, overbear all resistance by His mere will; if, that is to say, all conditions of ethical life are equally serving His purpose, and can be transformed by His bare will as soon as they cease to do so;—then, indeed, punishment is unnecessary and arbitrary. But if not, then punishment must needs be the means by which God manifests His displeasure, the mark put by Him on evil conduct for which the offender is responsible, and an influence employed by Him in the work of ethical education. The latter is the only view which is in accordance with the freedom and independence of man, involved in ethical relations, and with the abhorrence of sin felt by the most holy God.

It is impossible seriously to discuss the fourth objection, that the conception of twofold retribution is contrary to the Christian religion. Such an assertion simply reveals the ability of a sufficiently strong dogmatic bias to ignore the plainest facts.

For these reasons, among others, we must reject the philosophy of the Christian religion which is presented to us by Ritschl. But, notwithstanding, it behoves us to appreciate his witness to the fact that in dealing with man, his sin, and his redemption, we are lifted to higher ground than that of supposed divine politics, and that the vital bond of love between God and man makes our self-realisation of the greatest moment to God. If we accept

these conclusions, we shall be led by them to seek a theory of the Atonement in terms of ethical relations, and to niquire whether it is not intended to serve the ethical self-realisation of the sinners for whom it is offered.

We have reached the end of the critical review which was undertaken in this chapter. It is needless to recapitulate its results. From all the accounts which have been examined, it has been necessary in some respects to differ; but from them all the most valuable materials have been gathered. We must now pass on to the constructive portion of our work. But no statement of the nature and grounds of the Atonement which may be made will be satisfactory unless, when tested, it is found to do justice to all the positive principles which our inquiry has brought home to us.

CHAPTER V

THE SATISFACTION OF GOD

THE death of Christ is a sacrifice for the sin of the world. Our inquiry into the biblical doctrine of the Atonement[1] has led us to the conclusion that there is a consensus of teaching in the Holy Scriptures on three points: namely, that it has Godward significance; that it consists in our Lord's endurance of death in our behalf; and that the spirit in which He underwent death—His great obedience—is of vital importance to the efficacy of His sacrifice. By the Godward significance of the Atonement is meant, at least, this, that it is on the ground of the death of Christ that God forgives sins, and bestows those gifts of fellowship with Himself, of spiritual health, of progress towards eternal blessedness, which are consequent upon forgiveness. God, of His infinite love, provides this Atonement in order that He may be able to give effect to His mercy upon sinners. The question now before us is, whether we can discover the *rationale* of this awful yet gracious divine dealing; whether it is possible—not perfectly, perhaps, where so great a mystery is involved, but sufficiently—"(1) to find," as Dr. Orr puts it, "spiritual laws which will make the Atonement itself intelligible; and (2) to find spiritual laws which connect the Atonement with the new life which springs from it."[2]

[1] Chap. iii. [2] *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 341.

In attempting to answer this question, two important considerations must be borne well in mind.

The first point is, that the efficacy of the death of Christ, and in a large measure its spiritual influence, is independent of our explicit interpretation of it. As Dr. Dale has well said, "it is not the doctrine of the death of Christ that atones for human sin, but the death itself; and, great as are the uses of the doctrine in promoting the healthy and vigorous development of the spiritual life, the death of Christ has such a wonderful power, that it inspires faith in God, and purifies the heart, though the doctrine of the Atonement may be unknown or denied."[1] To no part of our Lord's work is the profound truth of Tennyson's beautiful lines more applicable than to His death:

> For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
> Where truth in closest words shall fail,
> When truth embodied in a tale
> Shall enter in at lowly doors.
>
> And so the Word had breath, and wrought
> With human hands the creed of creeds
> In loveliness of perfect deeds,
> More strong than all poetic thought;
>
> Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
> Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
> And those wild eyes that watch the wave
> In roarings round the coral reef.[2]

The second consideration is, that when we speak of discovering the *rationale* of the Atonement, we do not suggest that this can be done, or even can be rightly

[1] *The Atonement*, seventeenth edition, p. 4.
[2] *In Memoriam*, xxxvi.

attempted, by *à priori* speculation; that is to say, in independence either of the revelation which God has given as to the ends which He purposed in the Atonement, or of the evidence contained in the redemptive facts themselves. The endeavour after such speculation has often led to impossible and irrational explanations; the parade of such speculation has either shocked men by the lack of humility it betrays, or has repelled them by the rigid and often unreal abstractions to which dogmatists have had recourse.

It is needful, however, at the outset to have a clear and distinct understanding of this matter. In deprecating *à priori* speculation as to the grounds of the Atonement, and the confident dogmatism which has usually proceeded from it, we are not forced to take up the counter attitude, which not only denies that we can discover the necessary grounds and nature of the Atonement, but even denies, out of a spurious reverence, that there are such. This is the prevailing tone of the Latin Fathers, and it is faithfully represented as follows by Dr. Pusey, in his University sermon on the Doctrine of the Atonement: "It is one thing to see, as God enables man, something of the fitness or divine perfection in what He has revealed of Himself; quite another to argue that there was any necessity that God should do this or that, apart from the fact that He has so done. As God might, but for His free love, have left man to the effects of his sin (as, on whatever ground, He left the angels who fell), so He could, had He so willed, have set man free from his sin without the Incarnation. We may not set limits to God's omnipotence."[1]

[1] *University Sermons*, 1859–1872, p. 235.

The plausibility of this position is due to the ambiguity of the word necessity, to the exaggeration of the abstract attribute of omnipotence, and to the depreciation of the constraining influence upon the action of God of the perfection of His character. When necessity is spoken of, it is not intended to convey that it is imposed upon God from without, irrespective of His will; but that, His character and the facts of the case being what they are, it would be derogatory to His perfection to conceive of Him as willing or acting otherwise. Except as subject to such limitations, omnipotence is an empty abstraction. So far as that abstraction is concerned, we may be said to limit God's omnipotence by the assertion that He cannot act below the standard set by His own moral perfections; yet this is not in any true sense to disparage His power, but, on the contrary, to exalt it. Or again, it is no real disparagement of the power of God to attribute to Him such consistency of purpose that, as His counsels are wrought out in the world under the condition of time, His action at any particular moment should be determined by reference both to the general plan which He has laid down, and also to the particular stage of its fulfilment. Such limitations are self-imposed upon God by His wisdom and goodness. To ascribe them to Him is to exalt His name, and not to dishonour it. Hence, *man being what he is*, it is untrue to say that God could have set him "free from his sin without the Incarnation," because to do so by the forthputting of omnipotence would have been to tamper with the human nature which God Himself had created and constituted. Man would have been saved at the cost of his manhood, if such salvation can be conceived. A

spiritual nature can only be redeemed by spiritual means. And when we have come to perceive "the fitness or divine perfection" of His redeeming grace, we do not glorify God by saying that He could have acted otherwise, except so far as what we really mean is, that the will of God to do what is fit and perfect is unconstrained, and that the necessity of His so willing lies in this, that any other course would have been less adequate to the glory of His character and to the accomplishment of His purposes.

Again, it is needful to explain that in denying the legitimacy of *à priori* speculation it is not intended that the independent exercise of the reason upon this subject is uncalled for or out of place. This view, which is often taken, is thus expressed by Principal Cave: "The possibility of framing a theory of the Atonement, regarded by many as altogether chimerical, resolves itself in our case into the possibility of combining in one consistent view the numerous passages of the gospels and epistles which have reference to the atoning work of Jesus. This possibility has been demonstrated in the preceding chapter, and the theory there advanced can only be overthrown by demonstrating it to be inconsistent with Scripture, or by demonstrating the unreliableness of Scripture itself. Not a step has been taken into the speculative region; all that has been done has been to classify and colligate the scattered testimonies of Jesus and His apostles. We hold the Atonement of Jesus to be a pure matter of revelation, and speculation upon it to be wholly misplaced; but whether this be so or not, it is at any rate open to us 'to search the Scriptures.'"[1]

[1] *Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 325.

Such a treatment of the subject by mere classification and colligation of scriptural texts is to do injustice to the texts themselves, as well as to neglect a whole world of revealed truth not directly contained in texts dealing explicitly with the Atonement. In addition to such texts, there is given to us the revelation of the relations in which God stands both to His Son and to mankind. And the Passion itself rises before us, containing the living revelation which the statements of Scripture are intended to set forth. If the texts are to be understood, they must not only be brought together by a process of painstaking collection and arrangement, but they must be seen in their connexion with the redemptive facts which they explain. The texts must be studied by the help of the facts, and the facts by the help of the texts. And, above all, both must be set in the light of the relationships, original and as modified by sin, which exist between the Godhead and mankind. The passages of Scripture can have living meaning only so long as we rightly apprehend the relationships out of which both the need for the Atonement and its accomplishment arise, and correctly interpret the facts of the Incarnation and the cross. Granted the knowledge of those relationships and facts, and though the particular passages were to perish, the doctrine of the Atonement would survive. But without the illumination of the former, the latter would become mere dogmas, deprived of the larger part of their spiritual significance. Hence, though the material is given by revelation, the reverent but independent exercise of the reason upon it is necessary if the full meaning of the teaching of Scripture is to be realised.

The task set to theological thought on the Atonement is both deductive and inductive. In the first place, the relationships which are revealed as existing between God and man must be investigated, and the bearing of those relationships upon the Atonement must be deduced. In the second place, an inductive inquiry must be made into the meaning of the facts of our Lord's history; into the objective experience to which He submitted; into His subjective experiences, so far as they are disclosed to us; and into the resulting experiences of the apostolic writers as they are reported to us in the New Testament writings, and confirmed by the subsequent experience of believers. These two methods should complement and check each other, and, if correctly carried out, should confirm one another. And the results should correspond with the teaching of Holy Scripture, supplying from reflection the underlying principles to hold together in an organic unity the various declarations which are made to us with the immediacy of inspiration. Even if such a process could, under any circumstances, have been pronounced illegitimate in order to secure unquestioning acceptance of the oracles of the Scriptures, this is made impossible by the Scriptures themselves, which, by unfolding the relations between God and man, and by recording the facts of our Lord's redeeming ministry, force us to ask how these stand in relation to the doctrinal statements of the inspired writers, and what are the facts and laws upon which such statements rest.

In order to discover what is the nature of the Atonement, and why, the character of God being what it is, such an Atonement is the condition of the forgive-

ness of sins,—the following course must be pursued. We must, first of all, inquire, What is the relationship of God to mankind, in virtue of which He demands and provides the Atonement? Secondly, we must ask, What is the condition of man which occasions the necessity of the Atonement?—what, namely, is meant by sin? And, thirdly, we must find out how sin has affected the relations in which God stands to man, and what are the consequences of the change which has thus been brought about. If our investigation of these subjects is satisfactory, a careful examination of the facts of our Lord's life and death should then give the materials for answering our inquiry; and our final verification should be the correspondence of our present results with those we have already obtained by the exposition of the biblical doctrine contained in chapter iii.

1. Coming to the first question, What is the relationship of God to mankind, in virtue of which He demands and provides Atonement?—our unhesitating answer is, His Fatherhood; and this for three reasons. First, because this is the relationship which Christ Himself, "in the fulness of the times," has revealed as that in which God stands to men. Secondly, because this relationship is intrinsically the highest, containing and controlling all others. And, thirdly, because the revelation of the Holy Trinity, and of the constitution of the world in the Son of God, forces us to treat this relationship as the paramount one in the dealings of God with mankind.

But before we make good these reasons, let us pause to consider what is conveyed by the term, the Fatherhood of God. Most obviously it necessitates our conceiving of

the creation of mankind as the calling into existence by God, *out of His own life*, of beings at once kindred with Himself, and having a distinct individuality of their own. But this, so far from exhausting what is meant by Fatherhood, touches only its surface. The calling into existence of such beings—kindred with Himself, yet having personal independence—is motived by the love of God; introduces them into a world, a home, of love, which environs their whole life; and has, as its end, that fellowship of mutual giving and receiving, that most intimate communion, which can only be between those who are spiritually akin, a fellowship which it is the object of fatherly education to perfect. The motive as love, the end as fellowship, the method as the education of the home, all these are set forth when we speak of the Fatherhood of God.[1]

This divine Fatherhood must be treated as determining the Atonement, for the three reasons already mentioned.

(1) In the first place, because it is the characteristic revelation of Christ. There is neither space nor need to give here an exhaustive proof of this assertion. Two references will sufficiently establish, not so much the fact, which is admitted, as its universal application, which is sometimes disputed. Those two references are, the sermon on the mount and the parable of the prodigal son. The sermon on the mount not only contains the fullest revelation of the Fatherhood of God, but unfolds the whole spirit of human religion and conduct as shaped by it. The works of religion—almsgiving, prayer, and fasting—

[1] This subject is well dealt with by Dr. A. M. Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, pp. 444 *et seq.*

conduct, in its inward springs and its outward manifestation, our behaviour to others and especially to our enemies, the temper in which we should pursue the objects and meet the hardships of life in the world, all these are laid down for us by the Fatherhood of God.

It is, of course, objected from certain quarters that the whole of this refers exclusively to believers, that the Fatherhood is towards them and not towards mankind. But a careful exegesis will at once show that this is impossible. The sermon is not only a spiritual legislation for the company of the disciples, but a criticism of the worship and conduct of the scribes and Pharisees. These are condemned because they are untrue to the standard set by the Fatherhood of God. But that condemnation is just only on condition that the Fatherhood of God is not only objectively true, but universally true. The scribes and Pharisees are in the wrong because their worship and conduct is not a fitting response to the Fatherhood of God. But if that Fatherhood did not really exist for them, there could be no possibility of their making a response which only the Fatherhood could either inspire or warrant. Hence, as might be expected, the Fatherhood of God is only true and controlling for the disciples, because it is so for mankind. They may have the exclusive *enjoyment* of it, but certainly not the exclusive title to it. If there be any hesitation to accept this conclusion, the parable of the prodigal Son puts it beyond doubt. Some weight must, indeed, be allowed to the caution against pushing the dogmatic interpretation of parables to extremes; but when all such allowance has been made, it remains true that our Lord treated the publicans and sinners as standing in the same relation to God as that of the

prodigal son to his father. Unless God is the Father of publicans and sinners, as represented by the prodigal son, and of scribes and Pharisees, as represented by the elder brother, the whole force of the parable is destroyed.

(2) But in addition to the primacy given to the Fatherhood of God, by reason of its being the characteristic revelation of our Lord, its intrinsic nature is such that it cannot be treated as for any purpose or towards any person subordinate to any other relationship, or even as one of a number of relationships standing upon a level. The divine Fatherhood is supreme, all-embracing and all-controlling. It is clear, at first sight, that Fatherhood is a higher, more vital, intimate, and gracious relationship than any other which can be named; than, for example, that of creator, king, or judge. It is equally true, though not so immediately apparent, that Fatherhood includes all these other relationships in a higher and larger whole. Fatherhood is necessary to the explanation of any such creatorship as exists towards man. Without the attribution of fatherly qualities to the work of creation, it is impossible to do justice to its motives, its results, or its general spiritual conditions. Again, there is no such kingship as Fatherhood. Without kingship Fatherhood is incompletely manifested; and, on the other hand, kingship, as a manifestation of Fatherhood, attains a weight of authority and influence otherwise impossible, both because of the spirit in which it is exercised, and because of the sympathy and community between Governor and governed. Indeed, those who have magnified the kingly office of God as against His Fatherhood have demonstrated this; for they have commonly substituted the term Moral

Governor for King; and the adjective moral carries us away at once from the realm of external sovereignty to the sphere of spiritual life, of character, of conscience, wherein every sound definition inevitably qualifies the function of government by features which are most nearly shadowed forth by the moral authority and influences of the parent. And Fatherhood is, by necessity, legislative and judicial. The very intensity of its desire to foster the true life of its children forces it to watch them with sleepless vigilance, to lay upon them those laws which promote that life, and to visit their departures from truth and goodness with stern fidelity. So far from true fatherhood being easy-going in these respects, its eye is more searching and its judgment more inflexibly righteous, than those of any judge less nearly concerned in the conduct of those who appear before him.

It is because of all this that our Lord's doctrine of God, as compared with that of the Old Testament, shows no weakening of the sense, either of His authority or even of His severity, on account of the revelation of His Fatherhood. On the contrary, both are more deeply felt, although a deeper consciousness of His compassion and tenderness is present. The latter, indeed, are felt to be the more gracious because of the fuller recognition of the former. But in nothing is the divine wisdom more clearly seen than in the course taken by revelation. The Old Testament was devoted to the unfolding of the holiness of God, and of His authority over men made in His image. In order that these lessons might be realised, it was necessary that the disclosure of the Fatherhood of God should be postponed. In ancient religions, where

this was not the case, no conception is less ethical than that of the divine fatherhood, or than that of the character of the deity whose fatherhood is taught. Had Israel learnt the closeness of the relationship before apprehending the awful holiness of God, the same unethical tendencies which prevailed elsewhere would have inevitably degraded their conception, both of the character and of the Fatherhood of God. Only when those moral necessities had been safeguarded could men be taught to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven," and naturally to continue, "Hallowed be Thy name." It is the Fatherhood of the Thrice-Holy which comprehends the authority before which conscience trembles, and the kingly majesty whose commands all good men seek reverently to obey.

The vision of all this has only been given in our own times. A quotation from Dr. Chalmers will both make this clear and also the explanation of it. "We are aware," he says, "that the advocates of a meagre and sentimental piety keep all this jurisprudence out of sight. They would contemplate the relation between God and man exclusively in the light of a family relation —where, if you had the waywardness of children on one side, you had the unextinguishable fondness of a smiling and indulgent father upon the other. This may be the religion of poetry, but it is not the religion of conscience, which, we venture to affirm, is never, not even in one instance, fully awakened, but to the view of a broken law, and of a displeased, because a dishonoured, Lawgiver. You cannot discharge these judicial notions, these judicial apprehensions, from the relationship between God and man; and however often or eloquently He may be

spoken of as a God of love, yet none, we aver, has been visited by a real and practical sense of the question, who does not intimately feel Him to be a God of judgment." [1]

It is evident from this passage that Dr. Chalmers dismissed the divine Fatherhood as a clew to the dealings of God with sinful men, because it was represented to him as "the religion of poetry," portraying the Father as "smiling and indulgent," and because, under the influence of that false representation, he supposed that the introduction of the fatherly relation discharged "judicial notions," and that those who spoke of God as a "God of love" thereby slighted the truth that He is a "God of judgment." And this indeed was the case with the Socinian theology, and with those who were influenced by it. God was treated as full of good-natured fondness and tenderness, and it was asserted that His Fatherhood implied this.

The Puritan and Evangelical rejoinder strangely accepted this debased notion of fatherhood, stripped of its loftier and more virile features, as the only possible representation of the Fatherhood of God, although their own experience could not fail to teach them that it was a travesty even of human fatherhood. In order therefore to maintain those sterner aspects which their conscience brought home to them as necessarily present in the dealings of God with men, they fell back upon the Old Testament notions of the relations of God to men, profoundly modified by modern jurisprudence, political philosophy, and systematic ethics. These they held up as not only alternative, but superior to the characteristic revelation

[1] Chalmers's *Institutes of Theology*, p. 507. The same view is expressed by Bushnell in *Law and Forgiveness*.

of Christ, instead of protesting against an unworthy conception of Fatherhood, and showing, as they might have done, how, both in the teaching of Christ and in the nature of things, those sterner elements to which the Old Testament and their own consciences bore witness were present in, and were reinforced by, the Fatherhood of God. Thus a false antithesis left Fatherhood and the associated functions of lawgiver, judge, and king face to face as mutually exclusive; and the contending parties built on each respectively a system which they claimed to be the gospel, but which in each case, by its one-sidedness, failed to find room for, or to give fit proportion to, much of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, and hence became little better than a caricature of evangelical truth. From such an unsatisfactory conclusion the only escape is in the attainment of an adequate conception of the divine Fatherhood, as containing and transcending all other relationships, and in the cautious but fearless application of this conception to the history of redemption.

(3) But the third and not the least weighty reason why it is necessary to treat the Fatherhood of God as the relation which determines the Atonement lies in the revelation of the Holy Trinity and of the constitution of mankind in the Son of God. From these we learn that God becomes the Father of man in time on account of what He eternally is. The Godhead exists in the eternal unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is in and through those relationships that God is what He is; the primacy, in a sense, being with the Father. It is in and through the Son that creation has been brought into being, is constituted, and has vital union with God. Thus the world

stands in the closest connexion with the immanent life of the Godhead. The creative process has its source in the Father, its mediator in the Son. The creative product is conditioned by the Son, and has the Son as its head, through whom it has access to God. The external acts of God, in creation and redemption, have their ground in, correspond to, and reflect the immanent relations of the Godhead. Fatherhood as the source of the divine life, Sonship as the eternal expression of it, the Holy Spirit as completing the fellowship of love, in and through these the Godhead subsists. And the manifestation of God is the unfolding of what He is. The primacy of Fatherhood in the interior life of the Godhead means the supremacy of fatherly purpose in the exterior action of the Godhead. The headship of the Son over creation involves that His nature and His relationships in the Godhead give the law to those who hold their being of and in Him. However loudly we may profess our belief in the *doctrine* of the Holy Trinity, we are indeed trifling with it, and jeopardying faith in it, unless we receive it with the seriousness which makes *the fact* of the Holy Trinity the key of nature and of the history of the world. The primacy of the Father in the Holy Trinity makes the creation and redemption of man fatherly; the eternal headship of the Son over man necessitates that the true nature of man should be filial.

The truth of this is confirmed by St. Paul, through whose inspired teaching this practical significance throughout the universe and history of the Triune life of God has been made plain. At first sight, his use of the term "adoption," in reference to our sonship, may seem to imply that no original sonship belongs to mankind.

But a closer examination of the great passage on the subject in the Epistle to the Galatians (iv. 1–7) will show that the very opposite is the case. We are told, "*because ye are sons,* God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The whole context shows that the adoption ratifies and reinstates a prior sonship. The condition of men "held in bondage under the rudiments of the world" until the advent of Christ is treated as analogous to the position of the "heir," who, while a child, "is under guardians and stewards until the term appointed *of the father.*" It is exactly his sonship and heirship which makes his tutelage a bondage, and at the proper time brings it to a termination. And while in the case of redemption the matter is complicated by other factors than that of immaturity, and makes a special course of divine action culminating in adoption necessary to the enfreeing of the son, yet the whole foundation of the passage is removed unless redemption restores and fulfils a sonship which had existed before.

For these reasons it follows that the demand for, and the provision of, the Atonement proceed from the Fatherhood of God. This relationship, manifestly supreme because revealed by our Lord, in its very nature all-embracing, and resting upon the inmost secret of the life of God, cannot be treated as one of many, as only existing towards a portion of mankind, as a mere figure of speech, or as subordinate to the kingly, because, in order of time, the revelation of it succeeded that of the divine sovereignty. Nor can certain acts of God be attributed to the fatherly relationship of God to man, certain others to His kingly, and so forth. The relationship of God to man is a unique

and living whole. Each purpose and act of God towards men is founded upon the whole of His nature and the whole of His relationship, and not upon a part of them. It is less possible for the heavenly Father to divest Himself of Fatherhood in any of His dealings with men than for an earthly father to do so in his dealings with his child. Different aspects and functions of His Fatherhood may, no doubt, be abstracted from the whole for purposes of thought. We may set, for example, in the forefront, for the moment, His legislative, or His governmental, or His judicial activity. But we must not suppose that the entire action of God proceeds from, or is explained by, any one of those aspects or functions, in severance from the Fatherhood which is over, in, and through them all. And whatever result we may arrive at from the consideration of any one aspect or function in isolation must be set in the light of the Fatherhood and established there, before it is finally adopted. All conclusions that will not stand that test are both incomplete and probably irrational in themselves, and practically futile. An appeal always lies against them to the Fatherhood, and is certain to be made. In our subject this is especially true. Anselm with his divine majesty to be honoured, the Puritan teachers with their demand for the endurance by Christ of sufferings equivalent to those remitted to the elect, Grotius with his governmental interests to be safeguarded, these and all other theorisers will, without fail, and rightly, be forced to justify their explanations in the light of the Fatherhood, nay, to restate them in its terms. So far as they have distorted the whole, by viewing it from a lower standpoint and by detaching inferior relationships from the higher, in

which and for which they exist, the reason and heart of men will always overthrow their doctrine by calling in the higher and complete relationship of which they have failed to take due account. And the result of their unsound procedure will be that men will lose sight of the elements of truth, to which witness has been borne, in recoil from their one-sided exaggeration.

But, it is asked, is it not possible for God to stand in distinct and separate relationships to men, and for His Fatherhood, in some circumstances, to be powerless before the claims of those other relationships? In support of this, the concrete illustration is used of a judge in human courts who is also a father, but who, when his own son is brought before him as a wrongdoer, is under obligation to sink the father in the judge. A slight exercise of thought will show how fallacious is the application of this illustration to God. The human judge has relationships to his son in two distinct and, for this purpose, unrelated spheres. He is father in the home, and there his legislation and his administration should be paternal. In no circumstances can he rightly destroy the father for the judge within the limits of the home. The severest punishment there must justify itself to the reason and conscience of the *father*. But in the realm of public law he is judge, and not father. He and his son are to one another therein simply members of the same community, living under the same laws, which it is the duty of the judge to enforce. And the judicial office is a specialised function in the State, charged simply with the interpretation and vindication of the law. The community itself is only imperfectly paternal, and its paternal attributes are

exactly those which it withholds from the judge, except in so far as the upholding of the law is itself paternal.

It is evident, therefore, that this analogy is inapplicable to God. The sphere of God's family and of God's kingdom are one and the same, a whole which is co-extensive with the world, and embraces the whole of human life. There can therefore be no passing from the domain of the law to that of the home, and *vice versâ*. In all His dealings with us the Father is the judge, the judge is the Father; but the judge acts in the spirit and for the ends of the Father.

But two important objections remain to be considered before we can regard our conclusion as established. The first is more speculative; the second more expository, touching upon the biblical doctrine of the Atonement.

(*a*) The first deals with the adequacy or otherwise of Fatherhood to express the relationship of God to man. It may be asserted that the latter is so unique that the notion of Fatherhood is incompetent to set it forth. This is alleged by Dr. Dale. His silence as to the Fatherhood of God, which is so remarkable a feature of his lectures on the Atonement, is accounted for in his *Discourses on Christian Doctrine*. There he remarks: "It may be said that the relation between father and child is analogous to the relation between God and man; and that if a father does not require an 'atonement' before forgiving his child's sin, we have no reason to suppose that God will require an 'atonement' before forgiving ours. But no human relationships can adequately represent the relations between God and ourselves; and the analogy between the relation of a father to a child and the relation of God to

man breaks down at a critical point—the point on which the whole question of the necessity for an 'atonement' depends. The powers of a father are limited by a higher authority; he is not the supreme moral ruler of the child; the father is a sinner as well as the child. You cannot argue that because a father does not ask for an 'atonement' before he forgives his child, God can ask for no 'atonement' before He forgives us. God is the representative and defender of the eternal law of righteousness in a sense in which an earthly father is not."[1]

We are not yet ready to discuss the subject of the compatibility of the demand for Atonement with Fatherhood. For the moment we are concerned with the preliminary question as to the adequacy or inadequacy of the relation of father and child to represent that between God and man. On this it must be observed that no analogy drawn from the limited and dependent can, strictly speaking, be adequate to the absolute and creative, and that this defect applies, with at least equal force, to any other analogy than that of Fatherhood. So far as Fatherhood is concerned, the following differences (and more might be named) show how immeasurable is the interval between the heavenly Fatherhood and its earthly type. The human nature which the earthly father transmits to his child and shares with him is derived by both equally from God. The individuality of the child is impervious to the earthly father. The father's authority is delegated by God, is exercised within narrow limits, and is justified only so far as it answers to the

[1] *Christian Doctrine*, p. 241.

law of God; and, in like manner, the child's duty of obedience is limited by his relationship to God and to the objects of His law. The sphere of the common life of father and child, and its conditions, is limited; it is independent of the father's will, its laws are beyond his control. The supremacy of the earthly father wanes before the growing maturity of his child. Above all, an offence either of father or child against the other is, in addition, a sin against God, and sin can be committed against God alone. In all these respects the Fatherhood of God and that of man are in sharp contrast with one another.

But to what does all this amount? It cannot set aside the fact that our Lord Himself has specially consecrated the fatherly relationship to represent that of God to man, and that He has given not the slightest hint that "it breaks down at a critical point." Doubtless the divine Fatherhood is unique; and if we are to apprehend it rightly we must study the revelation of it, at first hand, in our Lord's own words and deeds, instead of by narrow and hasty inferences from the limited conditions of earthly fatherhood. But surely, on the authority of our Lord's teaching, we may expect to find the clew to God's action *along the lines* of the noblest human fatherhood. The superiority of His Fatherhood to man's, His all-holy nature, warrant us in drawing the inference, from all that is highest in the conduct of human parents, "if ye, . . . *how much more* shall your Father which is in heaven?" But His action can never be unfatherly, still less can it fall below the standard of the ideal fatherly. True, the whole history of redemption is not to be found in the parable of

the prodigal son.[1] But at least the following conclusions hold good, unless the parable is utterly misleading. The reconciling love of God, which is the source of salvation, the uplifting of sinners to fellowship with Himself and to newness of life, which is the essence of salvation, these are indicated by the yearning of the father's heart and by his reception of the returning wanderer. The penitent self-surrender of the prodigal is the earthly picture of the necessary return of the sinner to God. And, lastly, the unique work of Atonement, absent from the human story, but coming between the reconciling will of God and its satisfaction in the salvation of sinners, must spring out of, and be in harmony with, its source, and must find a point of contact with the contrite submission and the humble faith of the sinner. All this is sufficient to force us to decline to abandon the use of the fatherly relationship in searching for the ground and the nature of the Atonement, if the necessary and obvious limitations of the earthly relationship are borne well in mind. But we are in danger of anticipating, and hence it is time to turn to the second and last objection which it is needful to consider.

(*b*) This last objection is, that although it may be true that any doctrine of Atonement must be tested by the standard of the divine Fatherhood, yet the biblical doctrine is to be found partly in the Old Testament, where it cannot rest upon a Fatherhood not yet revealed, and partly in the New, where it is associated, not exclusively with family relations, but also with those of the law court and the temple.

[1] See a striking sermon on the subject preached by Dr. P. T. Forsyth before the Congregational Union of England and Wales at the autumn meeting of 1896.

Can it be that a doctrine thus built up can grow out of, and be conformable to, the fatherly and filial relations?

The difficulty is more apparent than real. So far as the Old Testament is concerned, the revelation of God was throughout *fatherlike*, even if His Fatherhood was not yet revealed. And the sacrifices, if we have interpreted them rightly,[1] were a fitting expression of the filial spirit. Both the demand for them on the part of God and the offering of them by men have a more sufficient reason, when Fatherhood, on the one side, and sonship, on the other, are seen to underlie them. Coming on to the New Testament, it is remarkable that while forensic ideas are in constant use by St. Paul in his exposition of the gospel, he never uses them in connexion with the death of Christ. He speaks of "justification" and of "adoption" when he deals with the issues of the Atonement. But the Atonement itself is dealt with apart from all such associations. A most remarkable example of this is found in the great passage in which St. Paul sets forth the grounds of justification, Romans iii. 21–31. Here, when, in the midst of dealing with the righteousness of God and the justification of believers, the apostle stands in presence of the death of Christ, he turns aside from all that is forensic, and speaks of His death as a propitiation—a term which has no possible connexion with law. Once more, the use, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, of the types of the earthly temple to set forth the sacrifice of Christ carries us a step farther from the divine reality, because those types were in a measure artificial.[2] But what has

[1] See chap. iii.

[2] The word is used here in its strict sense, and not in disparagement.

been said of the Old Testament sacrifices, as practised, applies with equal force to them when used as types or illustrations. If, originally, they are capable of being interpreted in terms of Fatherhood and sonship, not less are they capable of being so interpreted in their didactic application to our Lord. The God who gives and receives the Atonement is, in the New Testament, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The two names form an indivisible unity. Godhead is qualified by Fatherhood; Fatherhood by Godhead. By this double name the unique nature of the Fatherhood of God is set forth.

Our final conclusion therefore is, that this unique Fatherhood determines the Atonement in a twofold way: first, as towards our Lord, the Son of the Father's love; secondly, as towards men, having their being in the Son, as the ground and the Head of the race. No explanation of the Atonement can survive criticism which embodies principles either contrary to or falling below this twofold Fatherhood.

2. It has been necessary to deal with the foregoing question at considerable length, partly because of its importance for our inquiry, and partly because, as we have seen, it cannot be said that there is as yet general agreement upon it among Christians. But the second question, proposed at the outset, namely, What is the condition of man which occasions the necessity of the Atonement? may be briefly answered, because we are entitled to take for granted the generally received conclusions on the subject. To attempt to justify them would be beyond our present scope. That which creates the necessity of the Atonement is the fact of sin. Sin can be defined only by

reference to God; for it is an offence against Him, and against Him only. But, as towards Him, it may be defined in its relation either to His authority, or to His commandments, or to His ideal for men. Towards the first it is rebellion; towards the second it is transgression; towards the third it is failure, shortcoming, a missing the mark. As all three, it takes its rise in the spiritual affection, and is only completed in outward action. But while sin emerges as rebellion against the authority of God and disobedience to His commandments, the possibility of such a conflict of will is proximately due to the existence of a spirit of distrust of God and of enmity against Him, producing an estrangement of heart which has its issue in this conflict, and becomes an abiding temper. Through these three stages—distrust, rebellion, estrangement—is brought about the revolution which transfers the centre and object of man's being from God to himself. It is this change which Milton describes, when he speaks of man as—

> Affecting Godhead, and, so losing all.[1]

This selfishness is the very essence of sin.

Thus it comes to pass that, beneath the special sins which men commit, there is a sinful disposition. Moreover, according to the laws of heredity, sin has become organic in the race; and, in consequence of the solidarity of mankind, the society which is composed of sinners becomes itself sinful. Hence heredity, intercourse, the social atmosphere perpetuate and, left to themselves, intensify the common sin. The moral reason becomes

[1] *Paradise Lost*, bk. iii. 206.

dimmer, and, as the vision of God is lost, nature becomes disordered, and the strength of evil habits grows apace. Sin characterises mankind as well as individual men. The sinfulness of the race is necessary to the explanation of the sins of individuals; and, on the other hand, the sins of individuals are necessary to account for the sinfulness of the race. And both are attributable to an original fall of man, which poisoned humanity at its source, the first alienation from God being transmitted to all succeeding generations. Of course, this does not represent the whole case. The late Professor Clifford, pointing to the history of human progress, proclaimed that mankind was a risen and not a fallen race. There is no real contradiction between these two views. God has not let man go because man has rebelled against Him. And "where sin abounded grace did much more abound." But yet the prevailing condition of man is such that the grace of God has to win in all men a costly victory over a condition of earthliness, of separation from God, and of moral disorder, which is most painfully realised by those who are most in earnest to get the better of it.

According to the consciousness of God is the consciousness of sin. At first sight this may seem to be a paradox, for we have defined sin to be rebellion against God. How, then, can the consciousness of it be imperfect? The answer is, that the sinful principle is present in the disposition, and that disobedience characterises the action; but that both may exist where there is comparative blindness as to what is involved in them. The disobedient action, for example, is motived by a particular and, it may be, momentary desire. The spiritual conditions and prin-

ciples of the action may be so entirely in the background as to be altogether indistinct. In such a case, the revelation of God has a twofold effect. If the sin is persisted in, it rouses the selfish spirit into clear-eyed opposition to God; and in the same moment, the whole meaning alike of the temper and the action is flashed upon the spirit. Hence it comes to pass, that the first result of a great spiritual awakening, with a renewed vision of God, is always a new consciousness of sin. That consciousness in others is brought about by men who themselves live in the presence of God. It is not produced directly. It is not the consciousness of sin which leads men to seek after God; it is the consciousness of God which brings home to them the presence, the power, the heinousness of sin, as is well seen in the account of that vision of Isaiah,[1] which faithfully records, under the particular experience of the prophet, the universal course of the Spirit of God.

But let us see how the matter is affected when we take into account the Fatherhood of God. Immediately new force is given to the truth that rebellion against God is the destruction of our own true life. The claim to be self-centred violates the fundamental law of our being, sets at naught relations in which our life consists, and therefore is self-destructive. The divine law represents not only the nature of God, but, on account of His Fatherhood, ours. His law is the manifestation of His love; it marks out the way of our life. The ideal which it sets forth as the standard for us is not arbitrarily imposed upon conceivably alien material. It is the ideal of our

[1] Isa. vi.

own nature. The glory of God is the fulfilment of man; the fulfilment of man can be attained only through the glory of God. This double truth is placed by the Fatherhood of God upon a foundation that cannot be shaken. Therefore it is that sin is so inexcusable and so hopeless. Rebellion against ordinary law may be prompted by the irresistible dictates of love and life. It is the Fatherhood of God which reveals how utterly impossible is this plea for sin. Law, love, life, are so inseparably bound up together that sin is an equal outrage on each and all. Disobedience is against nature, not on behalf of nature. To be alienated from God is to dwell outside the sphere of life; disobedience is to transgress the conditions of life. Both the disposition and the action, by annulling the bond of love, so far as man can annul it, inflict a twofold wound upon God and upon ourselves.

And, once more, the decision which affirms this alienation, and commits the actions which grow out of it, is voluntary, is an abuse of that freedom without which men could not be moral agents. Therefore the consequence of sin is *guilt*. The responsibility of his fall rests with man himself, and with the awakening of his first spiritual consciousness this responsibility is brought home.

3. We come, then, to the third question. How has the entrance of sin affected the relation in which God stands to men? and what are the consequences of this change?

The answer to the first part of the question is that sin has brought the wrath of God upon mankind. The shortcoming of the race involves that the purpose of God in creating man is unsatisfied. The transgression of man

causes, in addition to this negative result, the wrath of God to abide upon him. But what is meant by the wrath of God? This subject is well discussed by Dr. D. W. Simon in his book on *The Redemption of Man.* He rightly calls attention to the forcibleness of the language used in the Scriptures to designate the divine anger, and protests against the way in which the conception of it has been weakened by those theologians who, in order to exalt it as a principle, have denied that it is an emotion of the mind of God. Nothing, indeed, will more certainly weaken faith in the *living* God than the hesitation, born of philosophic misunderstanding, to attribute to Him the active affections of love and anger, and the refusal to trust these emotions in men as any guide to what they are in Him. The conclusion at which Dr. Simon arrives is expressed in the following words: "The fundamental law of an organised being is the maintenance of itself intact, in harmony with its indwelling idea. This, too, is the great law of the divine Being and life. 'Be ye holy as I am holy.' And when we remember that the integrity of the divine life means the integrity of the whole world, especially of humanity, which lives, and moves, and has its being in God, we shall see that the one great condition of the well-being and orderly development of creation is the preservation and assertion of the divine holiness. Accordingly, the resentment felt by God against those who sin—*i.e.* who violate the integrity of His life, first so far as it is in themselves, and then as it is in the system to which they belong, and who bring guilt and dishonour on God Himself—is a resentment of an essentially altruistic character, as much more profound and

more perfect than anything found among men, as the relation between God and His children is more radical and more vital than that which can subsist between any creatures, however closely related."[1]

This is a most satisfactory account, and especially so as to the "essentially altruistic character" of the wrath stirred by sin, which violates the divine nature not only as it is in itself, but as it is in the sinners themselves, and in the world to which they belong. This picture might have been made even clearer and more emphatic, had the divine Fatherhood been more fully exhibited as the key to the possibility—nay, to the necessity—of attributing such an altruistic character to the wrath of God. True fatherly anger against a rebellious child is concerned far less for the personal integrity of the father's life than for the integrity of the fatherly and filial bond, and for the realisation in and through this bond of the filial spirit, and of the true life which proceeds from it. The father, above all others, finds his life by losing it. The integrity of his own life as father is preserved by the maintenance of the bond between himself and his child, and of the true spirit of the child. His anger is directed against the injury of these, and only reflexively concerns himself, because distrust of and rebellion against the fatherly authority—the withdrawal of the filial response—is the most grievous damage to the father's heart and life.

But it is strange that so true an account should be marred by a statement like the following. "Love and anger," we are told, "*per se* are mutually exclusive. But the same being may easily love and be angry at one and

[1] *The Redemption of Man*, pp. 249, 250.

the same time. He cannot, indeed, be angry with and be actually loving the same being at the same time; for his anger arises from some cause which renders love inconsistent—which checks the flow of love. In proportion to the strength of the anger is the feebleness of the love for the particular being who was loved, and who is now regarded with anger. But it is very possible that God should at one and the same time love one who loves Him and His holiness, and be angry with another who turns away from and despises Him and His holiness. A father here may become angry with one of his children, and to that extent cease loving him, without therefore ceasing to love the rest. At the moment of intensest indignation with the one, he may turn with deepest tenderness to the rest. Not otherwise with God."[1] Dr. Simon goes on to say that a man who is angry because his love has been repelled "will also, even whilst angry, carefully search for means of vanquishing the indifference, and converting the contemptuous aversion into loving regard. This is what a *loving being*, a *loving God* can do; but it is misleading to ascribe it to love."[2] That love can exist only where it is mutual! and that to wrong it is to destroy it! Surely both these are untrue to the most familiar experiences of everyday life. And how does the fact that any one is *loving* in general, or that he loves all the world besides the offender, supply the motive power to seek the reconciliation of the offender, whom by the hypothesis he does not love? It seems psychologically impossible. And to affirm that the father who is angry with a disobedient child at that moment

[1] *The Redemption of Man*, pp. 260, 261. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 261.

loves all the rest, but not that one, contradicts the consciousness of all who know that the intensity of the love is the fire of the wrath, that they are so angry because they love so much that indifference is impossible. The whole mistake appears to arise because Dr. Simon, in his endeavour to assert the emotional side of love, exaggerates it, and forgets that a permanent affection need not be in continuous and uniform manifestation. Love may survive the enjoyment and satisfaction of love. The jealousy with which it is guarded may excite the anger by which wrong done to it is resented. Love and hate are indeed opposites, and wrath may become hate and destroy love. But such is not fatherly love, and, by consequence, cannot be the love of God. "God is love"; and because He is love, His love co-exists with His wrath against sinners, is the very life of that wrath, and is so persistent, that it uses wrath as its instrument, while at the same time it seeks and supplies a propitiation. The wrath of God is the side of His love which is turned towards the sin that defeats His purpose and renounces His fellowship, and towards those who make themselves one with it.

What, then, is the consequence of this wrath? It is punishment. But careful consideration is necessary here, because divine punishment means so much more than human, and because the conditions of its infliction are different in many important respects which have a direct bearing on the Atonement. We have seen that Anselm dwelt strongly upon the necessity that God should "order" sin by punishment. This is true, and is most important so far as it goes; but it fails to do complete justice to the facts. That moral agents should fare

according to their deserts is the elementary principle of ideal justice, and it is to be expected ultimately under the government of God. Again, that the righteousness of God and His authority should be vindicated, will be admitted and contended for by most believers in Him. But neither of these propositions, nor, indeed, both of them together, goes quite to the root of the matter. The Fatherhood of God implies that when He creates, His nature does not abide within Himself, as peculiar to Himself, but passes over into creation and becomes universal in it, as its underlying reality. In other words, the divine Fatherhood makes His righteousness not merely an attribute of His own character, but the foundation, the indispensable principle, of the constitution of things. True, that constitution depends upon the character and will of God, but His creative act has given to it a *quasi* independence; and every theory of the relations of the Creator and the creature to each other has to satisfy both the absoluteness of God and the independent reality of the creature. Before God created, the maintenance of His righteousness concerned Himself alone. After He had created, and by creating had given His own nature to those who stood in filial relationship to Himself, His righteousness became a law,—nay, even an independent law,—as governing not only His own life, but also the mutual relations between Himself and His creation, and the nature of those creatures to whom He had given a *quasi* independence. It became necessary therefore that God, if His own righteousness was to be preserved, should not only manifest righteousness in His own conduct towards creation, but should demand it of His creatures—

that is, should claim from them a spirit and conduct in conformity with their true nature, and with their relations to Himself. Where this claim is not satisfied, it follows that it is incumbent upon God to vindicate His righteousness, not only as in Himself, but as vital to the order of things which He has established. In this sense the language used by Dr. Dale as to satisfaction being the honour paid by God Himself to the eternal law of righteousness, which is alive in Him, may be justified and preserved, although our interpretation of the independence of the law is different from his.

Nay, more, it may be said with truth that the law of righteousness, so understood, will vindicate itself. It is possible to go to two extremes: on the one hand, to speak of punishment as a mechanical infliction by God; or, on the other, to explain it as brought about by "self-acting laws." Each explanation brings into prominence an element of the truth. Each distorts the element which it sets forth, because it is held in separation from the other element, with which it should be combined. To speak of the infliction of punishment as though, in order that it should be directly by God, it must be mechanical, is to do imperfect justice to His immanence in the world. To speak of "self-acting laws" as though they were independent of God, is to assign to Him an otiose position in the universe. Each aspect must be modified by being seen as part of a larger whole which embraces both.

But in order to make this good, we must inquire into the differences which exist between the execution of God's wrath in punishment and that of men. These are due to

the difference between the relations in which God stands to men and to the world, and those in which man stands to his fellows and to the instruments he uses.

To begin with, punishment as inflicted by man has all the general characteristics of human actions. These are called forth in response to contingencies for the most part unforeseen, are occasional, and give effect to changing emotions in a temporal succession. But further, men, whether sovereign or subject, are external to the persons whom they punish, and to the instruments by means of which they punish. Their wrath needs such external and accidental instruments in order to possess executive power. These instruments of wrath, again, are equally external to the persons who are punished. A special offence is therefore punished by a special external and accidental penalty mechanically inflicted, the full weight of which is felt at the moment of its infliction. Whatever spiritual effect may be produced is caused entirely from without.

But God is not external to man and to the world. While He transcends them, He is immanent in them. He is the source, the constitutive principle, the law of their life. And the world is not merely external to man. It is in organic relations with him, through his body, which belongs alike to him and to it. Indeed, any ultimate metaphysical explanation of the relations between man and the world is constrained to acknowledge that they are even more intimate than this. It follows that all these factors, the immanence of God in man and the world, His transcendence and their *quasi* independence, and the organic relations between man and the world, go to determine the nature and the method of the divine

punishment which follows upon sin. It, too, will have its immanent, its external, and its organic aspects, and due account must be taken of all.

(1) Divine punishment has its immanent operation because of the immanence of God. His anger has in itself executive power. The wrath of God is the fire of hell, as His favour is the light of heaven. The consuming fire of His wrath is not at a distance from us, so that when we have sinned we may hide from it and forget it. He dwells within us. Whither shall we go from His Spirit? or whither shall we flee from His presence? To escape hell, being sinners unreconciled to God, we must escape not only Him, but also ourselves, whose nature has its being in and of God, however we may rebel against Him. Herein lies the awful truth of Milton's lines:

> Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell;
> And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep
> Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
> To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven.[1]

The wrath of God *is* the punishment of man. And, on the side of man, the withdrawal of the life from Him is death, — the suspension and destruction of all the functions and powers of life by their falling out of those spiritual relations in which they are exercised and maintained.

(2) But the transcendence of God and the *quasi* independence of man and of the world involve an external and instrumental element in the punishment of sin. The world, which God not only inhabits, but governs and uses, must be the instrument of His righteousness.

[1] *Paradise Lost*, bk. iv. 75, 78.

The very fact that it exists for spiritual and moral purposes insures that it shall be an instrument of vengeance upon sin. But here lies a great difference between the way in which God prepares and uses the instruments of His punishment and our way. As we have seen, ours is in response to unforeseen contingencies, is mechanical, isolated, occasional, and is, moreover, without complete control even of the instruments which we use. But in all these respects the conditions and methods of our punitive acts are in direct contrast to those of God. He foresaw sin when He laid the foundations of the world; He created the world as a living system, each part of which is in direct relation with Himself and, in Him, with all other parts; He created it to express His mind and to serve His purposes; He has abiding and complete control over the whole, for He both rules it and dwells within it. The world as existing in and for the righteousness of God must mark sin; but, in accordance both with His foreknowledge and sovereignty and with its constitution, it does so by pre-arrangement, systematically, and by an order which, while it is the completest example of law, is never, in any part or at any moment, separated from the living will of God. Thus the world, as a system, ordered by God and having its being in Him, corresponds to the foreseen fact of sin. In a double way it serves the purposes of punishment. It is instrumentally fitted to the wrath of God; it is calculated to retaliate upon the abuse of man.

(3) Once more, this system is not merely in direct relationship to God, but it is also organically connected with man. He is born into it as in some respects

a part of it; he is born into it as a member of a race. Here, again, arise certain most important conditions, which differentiate the punitive action of God from that of man. God has to deal with a race which is an organic whole, as well as with the individuals who belong to it. In a true sense the race is before the individual. Moreover, in the case of each individual He has to deal with a character, and not merely with its occasional action. Again, that character is in process of evolution, the course of which is being determined by the combined agency of inherited nature, of acts of free-will, and of general spiritual laws. It is therefore, as we know it, immature. And, lastly, God's external dealing with man is through a world which is organically, and not merely mechanically, related to man. Each one of these conditions affects both the present and the future punishment of sin. As part of a system, it is prepared for the race, and by a gradual process finds the individual in and through the race. It aims at character, is determined by it, and, taking the case of the rebellious in this world and the next, it becomes narrowed down and intensified by the exclusion of modifying elements according as, in the man, the persistent choice of evil hardens the heart and excludes from it the elements of good. And it does all this by organic growth and influence, and not by isolated and mechanical infliction.

Hence we may expect to find, and we do find, that the system of the world contains the beginnings, the preparation, and the promise of eventual retribution, but that at present it is not completely retributive; and, further, that it has penal elements, but is not

exclusively penal. Each man is engaged in shaping his destiny by fixing his character. And the dealing of God with him is neither exclusively nor even predominately punitive, though a penal element is everywhere at work pressing upon sin. The punitive is paternal; but the paternal is both deeper and wider than the punitive. Just as the punishment of an offending child, severely as it may be inflicted and felt, is a narrow circle resting upon and in the midst of the far wider circle of arrangements which testify to the father's love beyond, around, and therefore in the punishment, so is it with the present penal side of the world. The great system of the world and life to which we belong stands in direct relationship to our Father, and in complete contact with all His mind. It has its source in His love, and gives expression to it; it is ordered by His wisdom to correspond with our general condition, so that, for us *as we are*, it is the best possible world; yet it sounds the first notes of His wrath and inflicts the first strokes of His punishment. It does all this at one and the same time; and it rests with man, with what he is and becomes, whether those first murmurs of wrath rise to the thunders and awful smitings of the storm, drowning all other sounds and blotting out the heavens, or die away into everlasting peace. Looking at the essence of things and at their beginnings, two necessary, but as yet unfulfilled, correlates stand out in relief. They are these: eternal sin, eternal punishment; total sin, total punishment. And these as consequent upon, not as contrary to, the Fatherhood of God.

But even now the penal element is present, and that penal element is summed up in death. There is no space

here, nor is it necessary, to enter upon the questions at issue between the Scriptures and natural science as to death. However they may be harmonized, the following facts must be borne in mind. First of all, the meaning of death cannot be minimised by isolating it. The greatest efforts are made to reduce it to what is called a "merely physical" experience. It is open to question whether there is, strictly speaking, any "merely physical" phenomenon; it is certain that there are no "merely physical" experiences of man. The very fact that he *experiences* them gives to them a more than physical character. Ours is a "mystic frame," and the physical events which befall us, by becoming natural experiences, supply the material for spiritual experiences. And, above all, is this true of the final experience of death, whether as looked forward to or as actually encountered. The Stoics, no doubt, classed suffering and death under the head of "things indifferent," and Spinoza uttered the famous saying, "Homo liber de nihilo minus quam de morte cogitat." We may admire the fortitude and self-command; but the lack of humility, and therefore of the highest reason, is equally apparent. It is one thing to be deterred by cowardly foreboding or shrinking from doing the work of life, running its risks, and bravely facing death when it comes at last; it is quite another artificially to deaden ourselves to the impression which death naturally makes, to endeavour to be forgetful of it, and to refuse to let it exert upon us its natural influence as a solemn event of our experience. The spirit of proud and irreverent unteachableness is in the very attempt.

And directly we allow ourselves to come humbly face

to face with death, we shall recognise that it cannot be isolated from God. Nor can it be construed so negatively as to make it no positive act of His. It is willed and ordered by Him as part of His dispensation for the world. It also has its work in expressing His mind and will.

But, again, death cannot be isolated from the system of the world or from the general sphere of human experiences and arrangements which are governed by that system. Death is woven into the whole tissue of material life. Not only does it pervade the animal and vegetable creation, but it is prepared for in the physical and chemical properties and laws of matter. Just as there is throughout the universe the manifestation of life, so also throughout it there is the anticipation of and the preparation for death. And death everywhere prevalent has its climax in man. And with man death is present lifelong. There is not an interest of his in which it does not, though perhaps unrecognised, make its influence felt. Our moral and spiritual discipline, our temper of mind and modes of action, our personal and social arrangements are throughout largely moulded by the presence and the expectation of death. They are further affected by all those sorrows and sufferings—physical, mental, moral—which are its forerunners or attendants. Remove death from the system of the world, or from that part of it which affects man, and not only would the last chapter of his earthly course be altered, but every page of the book of his life, from the first to the last.

But although death is thus bound up with the whole fabric of things, it is, to the higher consciousness of man, and so far as he himself is concerned, an unnatural and

humiliating experience. In so far as human nature in men is aroused to realise the full possibilities of intellectual, moral, and social life, they inevitably regard death, as do the Scriptures, as the "enemy." The very merit of bravery in martyr or hero is that it dares to defy death. The man of full and vivid interests naturally looks upon it, with the Greek, as the hateful extinguisher of joy. The spiritual man bows to receive it as a chastening from God. The awakened yet unreconciled man detects in it the messenger of God summoning him to judgment, realises in it the presage of approaching doom. To be insensible to death is a convincing proof that a man has either hardly emerged from animalism or has relapsed into it, that he has neither inward worth nor inspiring objects, that his spiritual consciousness is asleep. To him who has the consciousness of God and the conviction of sin death appears as the "wages of sin"; a physical experience indeed, but one which stands in such mystic relations both to God, who inflicts it, and to man, who undergoes it, as in itself to be the witness to the wrath of God against sin, and the physical counterpart of the spiritual ruin to which it corresponds.

According, then, to the fulness of the spiritual consciousness will be the realisation of this penal meaning of death. Let there be one who has the unbroken vision of God in all things, who possesses the fullest spiritual life, who stands in deepest sympathy and solidarity with mankind, conscious alike of its highest possibilities and of its depths of sin and woe, and death, for all it is and all it stands for, will be an awful experience, such as grosser souls cannot even conceive. Yet the bitterness of death

is, and depends upon, the consciousness of sin. "The sting of death is sin." Let the consciousness of sin, with its concomitants, guilt and the wrath of God, fill the spirit, and death will indeed be awful. But let the love of God, the sense of reconciliation, illuminate the heart, and even death is ours—a chastening discipline, yet one in which the graciousness of the love is enhanced by the remembrance of the wrath.

[NOTE.—Before passing from this subject, it is necessary to answer two questions, which may be dealt with as they are presented by Dr. A. B. Bruce. In speaking of the distinctive teaching of our Lord and of St. Paul as to the meaning of death, he remarks: "It may be frankly admitted that the two types of doctrine are certainly not coincident at this point. There is, *e.g.*, a difference as to the view to be taken of suffering. For the apostle it is an axiom that all suffering is on account of sin. And, as we have elsewhere pointed out, this axiom raises a question to which the Pauline literature offers no answer. What about the sufferings of the righteous—the prophets, for example? Did they suffer for their own sins? Then they must have been exceptionally great sinners, as Job's friends said he was. Or did they suffer for the sins of others redemptively? If neither view is adopted, what other alternative is there which goes to the root of the matter? In Christ's teaching the penal meaning of suffering is not accentuated."[1] Are the sufferings and death of the righteous penal? Did our Lord teach that they were so? It will be seen that both these questions have a direct bearing upon our Lord's own sufferings and death.

As to the former question, the following view may be suggested as the alternative for which Dr. Bruce asks: The spiritual sufferings caused in an evil world by the passion for righteousness and by sympathy with men have, of course, nothing penal about them. But if it be borne in mind, first, that even the prophets are members of a sinful race, and themselves partakers of its sin, and, in the next place, that death is part of a system addressing itself, primarily, to the race, and containing only the earnest of exact retribution to individuals, then the penal meaning of suffering, even in their case, may certainly be maintained. That they should have suffered in common with mankind needs no explanation; that they should have suffered exceptionally is the crux of the difficulty. Must that excess of suffering be explained as a penalty for their own sins, or as a sacrifice for the sins

[1] Dr. A. B. Bruce, *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*, p. 402.

of others? Is not a third explanation the true one? Human nature being what it is, virtue becomes saintly and heroic; becomes also so securely the property of those who possess it, because it is chosen and persisted in, first, with the general and particular prospect of suffering for it, and then in the actual endurance of such sufferings. Without the suffering, neither the saintliness nor the heroism could be developed. Even of our Lord it is said that He was made "perfect through sufferings." And He, though He inherited frailty, was "without sin."

The statement that "in Christ's teaching the penal meaning of suffering is not accentuated" is in a narrow sense true. On the other hand, His teaching in conduct is vastly more impressive than St. Paul's in words. If St. John's Gospel is accepted as genuine, our Lord spoke of Himself as "the bread which cometh down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die."[1] His promise was, "If a man keep My word, he shall never see death."[2] The depth of His emotions—of indignation as well as of pity—at the grave of Lazarus,[3] shows how deep was His sense of what was involved in death. But, finally, His agony in the garden—even if St. John's Gospel be left out of account—is evidence how profound and terrible was His sense of the spiritual, and surely the penal, meaning of death.]

We have now answered our three preliminary questions. The relationship in virtue of which God demands and supplies the Atonement is His Fatherhood. The fact which occasions its necessity is sin. The consequences of sin are wrath and punishment, of which death is the witness and the earnest.

Our next step must be to place the facts of redemption by the side of these results. Men deeply conscious of sin have experienced forgiveness, have received the adoption of sons, and have entered into fellowship with God. And this salvation has come to them through Christ, and, as they have apprehended it, through His death. He, the Son of God, has by His Incarnation become the Son of man. He has realised human nature in sinless perfection, and has entered, at the same time, into the closest and most sympathetic fellowship with sinful men. By His advent, He

[1] John vi. 50. [2] John viii. 51. [3] John xi. 33, 38.

has come under and exposed Himself to that system which, as we have seen in those penal elements of it which culminate in death, expresses and gives effect to the wrath of God against sin. We may even speak of Him, with Bushnell, as "incarnated into the curse," or may, with Dr. Bruce, apply Calvin's words, that "He experienced all the signs of an angry and punishing God,"[1] not only to His last sufferings, but to "the whole time of His humiliation."[2] In and through that humiliation our Lord manifested in all its glory the filial spirit, making in death its last great offering to the Father. In His death He not only completed a supreme self-surrender, but gave the last proof of His adhesion to righteousness and of His repudiation of unrighteousness. He treated His death as the crown and goal of all His work. He underwent it as our Head and Representative, and through it He has become the object of a faith which crucifies men with Himself. Do not these facts, and the conclusions which we have reached, so illustrate one another as to explain to us the necessity, the nature, the spiritual principle of the Atonement?

We are now brought to close quarters with the main question we have to answer. We have seen that Fatherhood is the supreme relation in which God stands to men, and that that relationship determines His action in the Atonement. This must be on the lines of what we know of fatherhood, notwithstanding that the divine Fatherhood transcends the human, and that sin is an offence against God, the nature and gravity of which

[1] Calvin's *Institutes*, lib. ii., chap. xvi. 11.

[2] Bruce, *Humiliation of Christ*, p. 335. This follows the view of certain Reformed and Lutheran theologians.

cannot be estimated by reference to any merely human analogies. The question, then, is, Does fatherhood, human or divine, require "a satisfaction"? And if so, what is the nature and what are the ends of such a satisfaction?

To the main question the Socinians have replied with an uncompromising negative. They have, without exception, declared that a human father, if he be worthy of the name, does not require any satisfaction before he forgives the offences of his child; that the heavenly Father cannot fall below the earthly in grace and compassion; that the description given of Him in the Scriptures, and His invitation to sinners to return to Him, show that He has surpassed the highest human standard, instead of coming short of it; and that the glory of this grace would be obscured if conditions of satisfaction were attached to it. Moreover, they contend that it is unjust for the innocent to suffer as a substitute for the guilty, and they further argue that, if such substitution have really taken place, the salvation of all mankind must follow as a matter of course, for otherwise God would exact the penalty of sin twice over—once from the sinner, and once from his substitute. There is no need to deal specially with the last two contentions, for the entire view given in these pages will suffice to show that they are based upon complete misunderstanding alike of the relation in which our Lord stands to the race, which makes His death no *mere* substitution, of the nature of the satisfaction offered, and of the salvation procured by it; complete misunderstanding, finally, of the spiritual relation in which believers stand to the person and work of our Lord. All this will be clear to those who follow the exposition of this volume.

But how does the matter stand with the main objections? Those who have carried on the controversy with the Socinians in the interests of orthodoxy have admitted the incompatibility of fatherhood with satisfaction, have turned away to find other relationships on which to ground it, and have balanced the declarations of Scripture as to the mercy of God by others which witness of His severity. First they accepted, as we have seen, from the Socinians a conception of fatherhood which stripped it of all its more robust moral elements; then they went on to accept the statement that satisfaction was out of the question where fatherhood was concerned. Having accepted this conclusion, it, of necessity, operated to the general damage of their doctrine of satisfaction. Under its influence, they further hardened what had been expressed hardly before, by the deliberate expulsion from the Atonement of all qualities and motives which were fatherly and, strictly speaking, spiritual. They introduced, as a complete explanation of it, judicial conceptions and phraseology which are entirely absent from Scripture. They selected those passages of Scripture which come nearest to these conceptions, and placed upon them a narrow interpretation; so that, by reason both of what they omitted and of what they distorted, the testimony of Scripture was seriously misrepresented. In particular, they robbed the Old Testament sacrifices of the larger part of their real significance. All this followed by necessary consequence, from their acceptance of the Socinian premisses as to Fatherhood.

Again, the failure or the refusal to consider the Godward significance of the Atonement in the light of the divine Fatherhood has added strength to what are called moral

doctrines of the Atonement; that is, to those which regard it simply as proclaiming the love of God to sinners, and thereby disarming their hostility, and bringing them back to fellowship with God. Such doctrines have truly represented the Atonement as proceeding forth from the love of God, and bearing witness to it. But they have found no way of connecting this love with wrath, or of combining the utterance of the love of God with the offering of satisfaction. And thus there has been a certain lack of virility about their teaching, in addition to its other deficiencies. The death of Christ, according to such teachers, has saved us, by showing the greatness of the sympathy of God with us, in the full lengths of identification with us to which it went. But sympathy is best shown by the self-sacrificing service which ministers to objective needs, not by conduct which has no object save to proclaim the existence of the sympathy. In other words, sympathy is manifested by service; but the service must be undertaken for other ends than merely to show sympathy. Hence the force of the demonstration of the sympathy of God contained in the death of Christ consists in that death ministering to a real need. And the moral theories of the Atonement fail to satisfy us as to the sympathy, because they can give no answer as to wherein lay the need which was met by the death of Christ.

But it seems obvious that there is a fatherly demand for satisfaction in order to the forgiveness of an offending child, and to the reinstatement which follows upon forgiveness. That this was not seen was due apparently to the association which had grown up, through the influence of Anselm, of satisfaction with the thought of injured

majesty. And, of course, the magnanimity of fatherly love raises it above the treasuring up and the exact vindication of merely personal wrongs. But in the case of true fatherhood, what is personal stands for something that is more than personal. In dealing with a disobedient and rebellious child, the father has to do justice to his own character and will as an authority over the child—an authority representing the ideal of what the child should become, and guiding him on the way to its realisation. He has to assert the sanctity of the law which has been broken, and to secure its recognition. He has to bring home to the child the consciousness of wrongdoing. All this is the work of punishment. It is most truly in the interests of the child himself. And satisfaction is made by an act which, in its various aspects, is at once a submission to the father's authority, an offering of homage and reparation to the law, an expression of agreement with the father's mind, and a surrender to his love. All this is, and can be, expressed only in, under, and through that condition of punishment which has been entailed upon the child by his wrongdoing. The punishment which has been inflicted by the father is made the very means of uttering the conversion of the child.

The satisfaction rendered to fatherhood depends upon this response on the part of the child. Without it, not only can it not *be* well with the child, but the father cannot will that he should *fare* well. For the father is more than either a judge, who passes sentence, and is satisfied when the sentence has been carried out, or a governor, who may decide that clemency is consistent with the interests of the state. And a father's forgiveness is

more than the pardon of a king. The pardoned rebel goes free. His release from penalties, however, does not imply his reception into favour. But the forgiveness of a child is his restoration to the fellowship of life and love. And the first condition of that restoration is that the sanctity of the parental and filial bond,—of the law and of the spirit, which are based upon that bond,—should be so effectively honoured, as to enthrone them in the heart of the child, and for ever to prevent their being violated. The father therefore, as the guardian of the family bond, of the law which is the condition of the life of the child, inflicts the punishment which vindicates them. He is wroth until the child comes to the true mind with regard to them. His anger has nothing of personal resentment about it. It is therefore all the intenser and more impressive. His demand has nothing of harsh exaction about it. It is in the interest of the child himself, and is felt to be so by the child. It cannot be waived. The sense that the demand for righteousness is the demand of love is the most powerful influence upon the child, bringing him to make satisfaction. Only through such satisfaction can right relations be restored. And behind the special satisfaction to righteousness offered by submission to authority and by homage to law in and through punishment stands the satisfaction, in the larger sense, of the father in the well-being of his child, by his realisation of the filial spirit and of all which it includes. Atonement to fatherhood lies in restored, realised, and manifested sonship. That restored sonship is brought about and is proved only by homage to the violated law, in submission to the punishment which expresses

the mind of the father and asserts the supremacy of the law.

The parable of the prodigal son illustrates the truth of this. The return from the "far country" was the outward and visible sign of the return to the filial spirit. The father went out to meet and to perfect this in the son. It will doubtless be said that here no punishment was imposed by the father. But this does not set aside, but rather confirms what has been said. Our account of fatherly satisfaction conforms to what is involved where fatherly control is in its most absolute stage. But there comes a time when punishment can no longer be imposed by an earthly father; when, if filial wrong-doing is committed, it must be visited by God, and not by man. But this means that at that stage human fatherhood is a degree farther removed from being a perfect representation of the perfect Fatherhood of God. And in the parable the prodigal is under punishment, though the punishment which God and not man attaches to wrong-doing. He acquiesces even in permanent punishment: "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." That he has suffered, undoubtedly affects the father's mind and moves it to mercy; but, above all, that he *returns* in his suffering: this it is for which the father has waited, and of which his compassion at once takes account.

All this supplies light for the apprehension of the Atonement. We are on safe ground when we affirm this, not merely on the strength of our argument that Atonement must be on the lines of Fatherhood, but because it is entirely borne out by the redemptive facts themselves. Let us remember that we are concerned with a satisfaction

for sin, and not with a compensation for the remission of the penalties of sin. Let us remember, further, that sin, by rebelling against the authority of God, by violating the family bond, by alienating the life from God, and thus, so far as it lies with the sinner, destroying it, has called forth that wrath of God which guards righteousness in the interests of love and life. Once more, let us bear in mind that, in addition to the penal consequences of sin, visiting it through the environment of the sinner, the wrath of God is itself immediately and inwardly punitive. Then it follows that the essence of the Atonement must lie in its spiritual significance; that it must be a positive and active dealing with God; must carry us into a region higher than the consequences of sin and wrath, to make satisfaction to that spiritual order of love and righteousness which has been set at naught and, so far as sin can effect it, destroyed; that it must annul sin and all the works of sin; must meet wrath, dealing with it in and through its external manifestations, and turning it aside.

If this be so, we shall utterly repudiate the view expressed by Fritzsche in his comment on Romans iii. 24, which is quoted with approval by Dr. Pusey in the sermon to which we have already referred, that "Christ by a voluntary death redeemed *from* God men defiled by sins." The redeemed are "firstfruits *unto God* and the Lamb."[1] And we shall pronounce essentially defective the way in which the doctrine of satisfaction through the death of Christ is frequently presented. Take, for example, the following extract from Dr. Denney's lecture on the subject He speaks of our Lord's death as a "sin-annulling death

[1] Rev. xiv. 4.

because it is a death in which the divine condemnation of sin comes upon Christ, and is exhausted there, so that there is thenceforth no more condemnation for those that are in Him."[1] This is, indeed, the negative side of the Atonement; but it is only the negative side. And even that aspect of it can only be truly represented when seen in its living union with the positive side. The vulgar equivalent of this statement, "Christ suffered the penalty of sin, therefore I shall not," though true in itself, is a miserably inadequate representation of the Atonement, because it does justice neither to what Christ did, nor to what we receive from Him. Sin must be annulled if the condemnation and the consequences of sin are to be annulled. The mere endurance of the latter will not suffice to accomplish the former. The testimony of the Old Testament sacrifices, if we have read it aright, shows this. The surrender of the life under, in, and through penal conditions, its acceptance by God, these are the vital elements in the matter. The perfect union with and surrender to the Father, the fulfilment of all righteousness,—all this in, under, and through the penal consequences of sin,—it is this positive, active, and spiritual sacrifice which annuls sin.

All this must be set forth in greater detail. Our Lord, on His cross, meets and submits Himself to the manifestation of the wrath of God against sin. He does so as the last outcome of His organic union with mankind as Son of God, in and for whom we were created, and as become Son of man through His Incarnation. He is the expression of that true life of humanity which

[1] Denney, *Studies in Theology*, p. 108.

still belongs to fallen men, because of His Spirit within them. But by the Incarnation Christ becomes one with mankind, and not merely with the abstract true life of humanity. He is *man*, sinless, yet perfectly man, in complete union with the race. That union is therefore not merely physical, but spiritual. The perfect life manifested in Him stands in vital relation to all that is beautiful, true, and good in us. But there is another side. His assumption of our nature, through a human mother, enables Him to know the possibilities of sin with an interior knowledge, far different from the mere external contemplation of its principles. Sinless though He is, the possibilities of sin are presented to Him in and through His own nature. The temptation to the false is, as it were, the inseparable shadow attending the affirmation of the true. The affirmation of the good is by means of the repudiation of the evil. His fellowship with God is maintained by unwavering opposition to the spirit of alienation from Him. And though His victory is always constant and complete, this opposition is called for throughout. The temptation at the outset of His ministry, the agony at its close are evidence of this. It was by means of this interior presentation of sin through His own human nature that our Lord "knew what was in man." The book of human nature lay open to Him because of His own humanity. And hence His perfect sympathy with men — a sympathy which, in full realisation of their struggles and insight into their sins, unfailingly for them as well as for Himself, affirmed the true and repudiated the false.

But our Lord's union with us, and His power to

represent us, in a living way, would have been incomplete, and that at a vital point, had He not, by the Incarnation, come under the whole of that system of the world, the penal element of which culminates in death. His assumption of human nature under its ordinary conditions, carrying with it the renunciation of His divine power to transcend those conditions, except where the interests of the kingdom of God demanded that it should be put forth, involved the ultimate suffering of death. His undertaking of His ministry under the existing spiritual and moral circumstances of His time and place involved the manner of His death. His perfect apprehension of God as the "living God," His perfect realisation of human nature, with its inheritance of life, caused that to Him death should come charged with its utmost power to express both the wrath of God against sin and the undoing brought about by sin. His death in itself was the most awful tragedy of history. It was so as the unspeakably wicked requital by men of the supreme benefactor of mankind. Still more was it so as being a dealing of God with His well-beloved Son which seemed so entirely out of keeping with the Fatherhood of God as well-nigh to negative it. That He who revealed the Fatherhood of God should die the death of the cross—when we remember all that is included in this—in itself makes His death the most dreadful experience ever undergone by man. Add to this His apprehension of the penal significance of death, and His profound sense of fellowship with sinful men, and it will be felt that in the death of Christ there is the most awful revelation of the consequences of sin, and of the wrath of God against it. To quote the

words of Dr. Dale, "His hostility to our sins has received adequate expression in the death of Christ."[1]

How terrible this experience was to our Lord is witnessed by His cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Such a saying must be examined with the greatest reverence, as must all those which open to us some access to the spiritual consciousness and experiences of our Lord. But it must be examined, if only to save us from overstrained and hurtful interpretations. Responsible theologians have always disclaimed any intention to teach that our Lord became, in the hour of His death, the object of the personal wrath of God. Calvin's comment upon this saying is, that "it was drawn from the anguish of His inmost mind. We do not, however," he says, "suggest that God was ever either His adversary or angry with Him. For how should He be angry with His beloved Son, in whom His mind was well pleased? Or how could Christ placate the Father by His intercession for others, had He Him hostile to Himself? But this we say, that He bore the weight of the divine severity, since, stricken and afflicted by the hand of God, He experienced all the signs of an angry and punishing God."[2] To suppose that God could be angry with His well-beloved Son, even as the substitute for man; that this anger, if present, should be limited to a particular moment, and that the moment of our Lord's most meritorious sacrifice;—shocks both the reason and the heart by its irrationality and injustice. On the other hand, the saying is neither an illusion of weakness, nor the utterance of horror-stricken doubt

[1] *The Atonement*, p. 346.
[2] Calvin, *Institutes*, ii. 16, 11.

of God.[1] Neither the one extreme nor the other seems even compatible with the words as they stand. Our Lord is left alone with death. As it comes to Him, it is without any manifestation of that gracious ordering which reveals the Father's hand in every Christian death. And with the awful onset of death, in the unequalled strength of all that makes it terrible as the sign of the withdrawal and of the infliction of God, was conjoined the loss of the comfort of His supporting presence within. As the darkness over the land from the sixth to the ninth hour shut out the light of the sun in the heavens, so for the moment the blackness of death hemmed the Redeemer in, filling every avenue of His being. Thus He "tasted death," "the wages of sin," as none other ever did or can do. That tasting of death is only possible to one left *alone*. The manifested presence of God—and He only can preserve him who dies from being alone—destroys death, for "in His presence is life."

As we have seen, death is a spiritual experience, as well as a physical event; it is *in itself* the cutting off from life, love, God. A death which for the first time disclosed all that death can be was encountered by One who was left alone. It was necessary that our Head should thus exhaust the bitterness of death. But the experience, though supernatural, came to Him naturally through His unique combination of spiritual strength and insight with the weakness which was the inevitable result of the weight of a world of sorrows such as we cannot even imagine, much less express. Both the strength and the weakness forced Him to know death as the negation of God.

But we must be careful not to introduce into our concep-

[1] Simon, *The Redemption of Man*, p. 318.

tion of this experience a morbid element which the words themselves, if naturally taken, exclude. Our Lord's position as Redeemer, considered in the light of St. Paul's statement that He was made "sin for us," has led some to import into the sufferings of our Lord an infection of sin, not His own, yet felt to be His own, assaulting Him as though His own, well-nigh imperilling at the last His fidelity to God. They have supposed that He came near to the consciousness of being an embodiment of sin, near enough to a sense of guilt to stand before God as uttering the repentance of mankind. It is impossible, of course, to enter into the secrets of our Lord's spirit during His agony, and it is for every reason well not to speculate upon them. But not even this word from the cross reveals any such experience, much less do the other words. Had this been our Lord's consciousness, instead of wonder that God had forsaken Him, there would have been the sense that this forsaking was His desert. The very contrary was the case. The anguish of the cry is in the surprise, and not only in the bitterness of the experience. The forsaking was unexpected, and it was met with the agonized wonder which only the integrity of perfect righteousness can know. No consciousness of His own, however momentary, can explain to Him the desertion of His Father. The only explanation is that death, the witness of wrath against sin, is here doing the worst against Him who stands for guilty men.

But His response is the perfect filial response, which makes satisfaction and completes reconciliation. Through the awful darkness He passes unscathed. His "it is finished" is crowned by His "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." His answer to the Father's dealing

with Him is in perfect self-surrender, in the presentation of Himself to God, in His unfailing trust, in His abiding in the fellowship of the Father as His eternal life. Here, indeed, is the triumphant opposite of alienation and rebellion. In death—the death of the cross—our Lord dwells in God, surrenders Himself to God, renders back the life of sinful man to God, restores it to God in a supreme act of submission, and thus makes complete satisfaction for sin.

Herein a completed obedience was set against the disobedience of mankind. He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." The last clause shows that the words "unto death" are to be understood as signifying the degree and not the termination of the obedience. "Death, even the death of the cross," was the climax of the obedience, the supreme test to which it was exposed.

Death, standing for the sum total of all our Lord's sufferings, brought out, tested, and expressed the spirit of His obedience. That He remained faithful carried as its consequence that He was exposed to an infinity of sorrows, which were felt all the more deeply by one so sensitive and so pure. Physical sufferings were the lightest of these sorrows. There was the humiliation of utmost weakness, the sense of shame under the despiteful treatment with which He met. There was the bitterness of earthly failure, with the weariness which it produces; still more the suffering from unjust requital, from the contemptuous repulse of unequalled love, from the baffling sense of being hopelessly misunderstood. There was the anguish which came to the All-holy from contact with sin, from the

apprehension of it in all its horror, from exposure to its temptations. He met with the opposition of sinful men by reason alike of the ignorance that is in sin and of its opposition to God. His prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," refers to the former; St. Paul's quotation from the psalmist, "The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell upon me," refers to the latter. He had at once unique sympathy with mankind and unique hatred of their sin, and the combination brought with it a sorrow peculiarly His own. Probably the assaults of evil were added to all His other woes. And, as we have seen, the comforts of God were withdrawn from Him; the spiritual and moral order seemed to fail Him in the extremity of His need. All these, and more, were the sufferings which His obedience involved. They did but serve to manifest its unfaltering strength, its manifold graces of patience, longsuffering, meekness, and gentleness, its unflinching loyalty to righteousness.

Death, then, was the crown of our Lord's obedience, the supreme test applied to it. The surrender to death brought to His obedience new elements, without which it could not have been complete. It is one thing to serve God in the face of, and by means of, hardship and opposition in the ceaseless activities of the noblest life. It is another to surrender that life, with perfect trustfulness, in outward failure, in utmost shame, uncheered by any token of sympathy from man or even from God. That irrevocable offering, that whole burnt sacrifice, is, indeed, the triumph of consecration. Without it, obedience has escaped its severest trial, has come short of its highest manifestation.

In our Lord's death, both the trial and the triumph were unique.

It is the fashion with some to disparage our Lord's sufferings. It is pointed out that the pains of crucifixion are slight as compared with the tortures which fiendish ingenuity has invented for many of the martyrs of history. Or the virtue of our Saviour's endurance is said to be lessened by the fact that He looked forward to the approaching victory of the resurrection. Both the one and the other objection show complete inability to realise the conditions of the Passion. The physical suffering was the least part of what our Saviour endured ; it was *the meaning* of the suffering which was in all respects so terrible. It was as being the answer made by man to the love which gave all it had and was to him, as being the result of living for righteousness and God in a world which Christ discerned to be the home of both, as being the visitation of the Father in whom and for whom the Son had lived, that death had, for our Lord, an overwhelming awfulness to which the most exquisite tortures are a trifle of small account. To know the sufferings of Christ, it is necessary not merely to pass through the same objective experiences, but, to say the least, to have the same unbounded love, the same commanding faith, the same unsullied holiness, as His. It was through these that He suffered, and only in a subordinate way through His flesh. And His assurance of the resurrection, so far from diminishing the spiritual glory of His sacrifice, enhanced it. For under the conditions of the Incarnation, which respect the integrity and the normality of the manhood, that assurance could only come to our

Lord by means of faith,—a faith in the Fatherhood and in the kingdom of God so triumphant as not only to abide unshaken, but actually to grow mightier through the prospect and the experience of the Passion. To yield Himself up to God in such a death with unhesitating self-surrender was great indeed; to do so in the confidence that He who received the life would restore and perfect it for Himself and for the world was greater still. And the spirit of trustful surrender to the Father who smote Him, of self-sacrificing service to the men who rejected Him, of allegiance to the righteousness which appeared to fail Him in the extremity of His need, makes His death, without possibility of comparison, the supreme ethical act of human history.

The sufferings in which and over which our Lord's obedience triumphed were, as Dr. Westcott has taught us to recognise, not only the occasion of its manifestation, but the means of its perfecting. They were so organically related to our Lord as to be a discipline. Had it been otherwise, not only the sufferings, but also the obedience would have been unnatural, because nothing in the normal life-experience would have called it forth. And here, certainly, the unnatural is the irrational, and the irrational is the impossible. It was exactly because our Lord's sufferings were, like ours, the means of maturing His character (though not like ours, the means of correcting it, for it needed no correction), that the sufferings evoked the obedience which sanctified them, and became themselves the expression of that obedience to God. Had their connexion with our Lord been less natural and vital, His endurance of them would not

have been the living spiritual act it was, and their ethical significance would have been lost. As it was, they called forth and served as the manifestation of the fulness of the filial spirit which was in Christ.

To sum up. Our Lord in His death fulfilled all the conditions of filial satisfaction. He "tasted" to the full of those penal conditions which reveal the wrath of God against sin; He made them, by His perfect self-surrender, the means of perfecting His fellowship with the Father, the consummation of His obedience, His homage to that law of righteousness of which sin is the transgression.

To whom was the satisfaction made? The language of our Lord throughout teaches us that it was made to the Father by the Son. But it must be borne in mind that the Father stands for the Godhead in demanding the sacrifice; the Son stands for the Godhead in presenting it. The unity and eternal co-operation of the Persons of the Holy Trinity involve that all are with the Father in His demand, and that all are with the Son in His satisfaction; while the special relations of the divine Persons to one another and to man involve that the demand is made by the Father and satisfied by the Son. The unity of the Godhead in the Atonement must be carefully maintained. The saying of Augustine, "Omnia ergo simul et Pater et Filius et amborum Spiritus pariter et concorditer operantur,"[1] is of the greatest importance. The consideration of whatever difficulty is involved in it must be postponed for the moment. Meanwhile, it must be remarked that just here popular theology is in the greatest danger. It has too often, in thought, divided the

[1] Augustine, *De Trinitat.*, lib. xiii., cap. xi.

Holy Trinity, attributing wrath and justice to the Father, mercy to the Son. It has personified contrasted attributes of the divine Nature, and has represented them as bargaining and arranging with one another. The whole has been profoundly influenced by the conception of Milton. And Milton's conception, whatever grandeur it may possess, is spoiled by his Arianism. This is clearly seen in the following passage:

> Die he or justice must; unless for him
> Some other, able, and as willing, pay
> The rigid satisfaction, death for death.
> Say, heavenly Powers, where shall we find such love?
> Which of ye will be mortal, to redeem
> Men's mortal crime, and just, the unjust to save?
> Dwells in all heaven charity so dear.[1]

The Son's answer is—

> Behold *Me*, then: Me for him, life for life,
> I offer; on Me let Thine anger fall;
> Account Me man: I for his sake will leave
> Thy bosom, and this glory next to Thee
> Freely put off, and for him lastly die
> Well pleased.[2]

Here, indeed, there is no attribution of wrath to the Father, of mercy to the Son. That has been derived rather from the shortcomings of popular Protestant theology than from Milton. The revolt of that theology from the mediæval spirit, according to which God was an object of dread, and the Redeemer's mercy was obtained through the compassion and intercession of Mary His mother, was not sufficiently thorough. It vindicated, indeed, the spontaneous compassionateness of the Son, and condemned the monstrous supposition that He needed womanly entreaties

[1] *Paradise Lost*, bk. iii. 210–216. [2] *Ibid.*, bk. iii. 236–241.

to induce Him to save the world, for which He died; but it left the gloom surrounding the Father unrelieved. And thus, strangely, the Father remained the object of fear and not of hope. The theology of Milton, as of all the greater Calvinists, is high above so unworthy a conception. He represents the Father not as moved by wrath, but as baffled by a difficulty. The Father has already said—

> Man falls, deceived
> By the other first: man therefore shall find grace;
> The other, none.[1]

But the claims of justice rise up to bar this grace. And it is to meet these claims that the Father challenges the heavenly Powers. But the very challenge shows a defective sense of the infinite distance between the Son and them. It proclaims a demand which the Son has no part in either making or upholding, invites a sacrifice in which the Father takes no share. The relations of the Father and the Son are throughout treated as external, their action as mutually independent. Should the limitations of epic poetry be pleaded in extenuation of this fault, the answer must be made that if the poetry be unequal to the subject, it must refrain from handling it, but that the grandeur of the poetic form is no excuse for the fatal misrepresentation of so sacred and so momentous a subject. In his failure to recognise the unity of the Godhead and the true divinity of the Son, in his consequent inability to do full justice to the mercy of the Father and to the righteousness of the Son, Milton has placed the sacrifice outside the Godhead, and represented as the accidental result of a council in heaven what should be shown to be

[1] *Paradise Lost*, bk. iii. 130–132.

the undivided and characteristic action of Him who, in the unity of the Three Most Holy Persons, is Love.

The satisfaction for sin required by the Fatherhood, and subordinately by the nature of man, could only be rendered by the incarnate Son of God. To the full establishment of this proposition, the discussions on the original relationship of our Lord to the human race and on the bearing of our Lord's Divinity on the Atonement, with which chapters vii. and viii. are respectively occupied, are necessary. But, meanwhile, thus much can and must be said. The suggested alternative to such a satisfaction as has been described is the penitence of individual sinners, and it is urged that this is a sufficient reparation for the wrong-doing of sin. In the main, this contention can only be met by an appeal to the facts. We must go beyond even the inspired texts, which lay down what was needful to be done in order to forgiveness, to the narratives which recount to us what actually *has been done* by the death of Christ,—as at once an objective and a subjective experience, a suffering and a sacrifice. The necessity must be deduced from the fact, rather than the fact accounted for by the necessity. But approached in this way, the fact itself becomes luminous with the reasons which account for it.

To begin with, sin has come by way of a race-act, and remains as a race-condition. The act of satisfaction, performed by our Divine-human representative, is in a corresponding way a race-act belonging to a larger sphere than that of merely individual experiences. In the next place, the homage and reparation to the divine authority and law must be a sinless act, neither extorted by necessity nor

tainted by selfishness. And this involves that the offerer be himself sinless. It involves, further, that the death in and through which this reparation is made must be submitted to voluntarily and not of necesssity.[1] Again, it must be a conspicuous act, insuring that because of it the authority, purpose, law, and love of God shall henceforth be held in universal honour. And it must be an influential act, so performed for the race by Him who is both its consummation and its living and eternal Spirit, that what He does once for all on behalf of the race may be extended to and repeated (so far as this is intrinsically possible) in the experience of each individual penitent who comes to God. All this is indeed present in the Atonement. When we find that these ends were actually secured by it, we are entitled to conclude that it was necessary that they should be secured. And this necessity becomes the more impressive the more fully we realise that the race as a whole is concerned, and not merely a multitude of individuals. It will be made clear in chapters vii. and viii. that such a satisfaction as this could only have been offered by the divine Son of God.

Once more, the death of Christ is vicarious, in the sense that He did for us that which was both necessary to be done and impossible for us to do. In answer to the objections ordinarily made against the doctrine that

[1] Here is one of those features in which the divine reality may be expected to, and does, go beyond its human analogies. The experience of death stands in a far more intimate relation to the act of satisfaction in our Lord's Atonement than does the particular punishment imposed by an earthly father to the submission of the child. Hence, not only must the self-oblation be voluntary, but in order to this the endurance of death, through which this voluntary self-oblation is made, must itself be voluntary.

the innocent Redeemer suffered for the guilty, the noble words of Dr. Dale may be quoted. "It is beautiful and gracious," he says, "to dismiss our resentment against those who have sinned; it is more beautiful and more gracious freely to suffer for them. Who shall dare to deny to God—in the name of justice—the highest form of goodness that is possible to man? If, by enduring death for us, the Son of God, in whom and through whom the human race is related to the Eternal Father, can enable the divine mercy to liberate men from the awful sense of guilt, and from the loss and penalty which by the principles of the moral order of the universe they have incurred by sin, who shall venture to tell Him that divine justice forbids the sacrifice, and that human misery cannot accept the redemption which the sacrifice achieves? He, too, will answer, that love is diviner than justice, and that He suffers gladly if only the guilty may be saved."[1] This is, in effect, to say what our preceding discussion has made clear—that ordinary retributive justice is both an insufficient and an unsatisfactory attribute for the explanation of the Atonement, which has to do with higher, broader, and deeper interests than those of justice, though, of course, those interests are not out of harmony with justice. Substitution cannot be brought under the terms of retributive justice, the very watchword of which is *suum cuique*; yet this is not to pronounce substitution impossible, but simply to force us to seek the explanation of it in a realm in which judicial interests are not supreme.[2] And,

[1] *Discourses on Christian Doctrine*, p. 250.

[2] The common arguments as to the injustice of the innocent suffering for the guilty, and the dilemma which is presented, that either Christ suffered

further, the vicarious nature of the Atonement does not bear the meaning that it is a case of simple substitution. This will become clearer later on.[1] Our Lord lives and dies on our behalf, because He is our eternal head and representative. That He is so does not lessen the glory of the love which caused Him freely to condescend to us in our sin and misery. His Incarnation and His cross are, as Bushnell has impressively shown, the highest exemplification of the universal truth that love is a vicarious principle, and that its life is in sacrifice. A sense of kinship inspires all noble deeds of human service; and the deed before which all others pale, like the stars before the sun, is prompted by the wonderful love which is "not ashamed to call us brethren," sinners though we are.

But we must pass to another and most important part of the subject. We have seen that the fatherly demand for satisfaction, in order to forgiveness and restoration, has an end beyond itself. It has regard to the fulfilment of the filial life, and thereby to the perfecting of the child. In short, there is a narrower and a larger satisfaction, and the former is the means of the latter. There is the satisfaction rendered to the father's authority and to the father's law. But thereby is brought about the satisfaction of the father's heart, of his hope and purpose of the complete realisation of the

the full penalties of sin and then all sinners should be free, or that He did not and then there is no judicial ground for their release, owe whatever plausibility they possess to the mistaken habit of treating the Atonement as dealing with abstract justice, and as purely the endurance of judicial penalties, instead of as being a reparation to the law of righteousness, which restores the family bond between God and sinners.

[1] See chaps. vii. and viii.

child's life in fellowship with himself. The demand for the former is so rigorous because it is indispensable to the latter. The father's authority having been set at naught, his law transgressed, his love spurned, the child's nature and the father's hope have both been so far destroyed. The way to restoration is through reparation, and the reparation is demanded in order to restoration. The offence having entered, the fulfilment of the possibilities of filial life,—still the supreme object of the father,—can only be brought about by a satisfaction rendered under penalties.

But the ultimate end sought is the fulfilment, and not the satisfaction. And we are on sure ground in extending this analogy of human satisfaction to God. His Fatherhood, as set forth by Christ; the nature of the law of righteousness, as being the law of life and love; the spiritual content of our Lord's life and death, as being the supreme manifestation of the true life of man; and, finally, the effect of that life and death upon believers, in their regeneration and uplifting,—each of these is a clear warrant for our finding the ultimate end of the Atonement to be the fulfilment of the true life of humanity. And, taken together, they give an overwhelming proof that this is so. The first two points have been already investigated; the full treatment of the last must be reserved for a separate chapter, dealing with the relation of justifying faith to the Atonement.[1] But the third point must be examined at once.

Our Lord, by His life and death, fulfils the true life of humanity. Christ, who is the life and head of the race,

[1] See chap. ix.

is its spiritual archetype, its realised ideal. The result of the Incarnation was to realise this spiritual and moral ideal. The divine and human natures generally are so related to one another through the Son, that the divine can condescend to the human, and the human can manifest the divine. As the result, when the divine nature was perfectly united with the human in the person of the incarnate Son, there was brought about the perfection of the human nature, and through it the perfect manifestation of the divine. The assumption and pervasion of human nature by the Son of God led to the realisation of a humanity which, in its spiritual and moral qualities, is the divine ideal of man. That ideal is expressed towards God by sonship, towards man by brotherhood, towards the world and its experiences by lordship. The fulfilment of this ideal in the Incarnation has in itself importance for the work of redemption. The ethical perfection, the active and sinless obedience of our Lord's life, was more than a demonstration of the spotlessness which was necessary in order that He might be accepted as a sacrifice. Nor must it be separated from our Lord's death, as though the function of the life were to complete the prophetic office of revelation, while the death commenced the priestly office of expiation. The death was the climax of the revelation; the life was the foundation of, the preparation for, the expiation. The self-oblation which was consummated on the cross was begun at the Incarnation; the sufferings which culminated in death made themselves felt in a preparatory way throughout the whole of our Lord's earthly course. Thus, if Christ is the fulfilment of man, His death is the fulfil-

ment of Christ. Therein was perfected and expressed the spirit of the Son of God, of the Brother of mankind, of the Lord of life and of the world. The death of Christ was the earthward side and expression of His highest spiritual life. His abiding life was perfectly revealed in death. Indeed, we may truly say, that never did He so truly and fully live as when He died. In satisfying righteousness, Christ realised for Himself and implicitly for believers the true life of love, of fellowship, of trustful surrender and obedience, of the affirmation of righteousness and repudiation of sin, which the Father seeks to produce in all men because they are His sons. Therefore if the fact of sin and the necessity of expiation be left out of account, the death of Christ will stand out as the achievement and the manifestation of the highest spiritual life of man. As the supreme act of faith, of righteousness, of self-surrender and service in the history of the world, it stands in natural as well as supernatural relation to every holy and heroic deed which has glorified the annals of mankind. In the spiritual splendour of the cross the Father saw the fulness of His own mind—His love, His righteousness, His hatred of sin—reflected, saw man attain to highest perfection as the Son of God, made one with the Father's mind and will. In the cross, therefore, was consummated that perfect spiritual fellowship which fatherhood is constrained, by its very nature, to seek and sonship to enter into.

This is the testimony contained in the facts of the Incarnation and the cross themselves. And therein a great principle is revealed. Irenæus laid down that the end of the redemptive work of Christ was to prevent the

utter destruction of the human race.[1] Anselm, that it was undertaken because it would have been unseemly for God not to perfect that which He had begun.[2] Neither of these statements does justice to the facts. Christ did save the human race from perishing, and God did by Him complete that which He had begun. But the facts themselves show that the whole truth can only be stated in terms of the divine Fatherhood, and of its highest ends of love. Creation and redemption are undertaken that God may take sons into everlasting and complete fellowship with Himself. The perfecting of their spiritual possibilities is of the very essence of this design of His fatherly love. In Christ this highest end is accomplished, and not in and for Himself alone, but potentially for the world, for He is the Head, the Life, the "sinless root," to use Maurice's phrase, of mankind. Not only a negative deliverance, but a positive fulfilment, is brought about by "Christ crucified." The cross therefore is the highest expression and satisfaction of this fatherly purpose of God. As an indispensable propitiation, it is yet the means, and the only means, to that highest and ultimate end.

Only by the satisfaction of the cross could that end be obtained. It was not a new race, untainted by sin, which was to be brought to the perfection of sonship in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. The old and fallen race was to be redeemed, and not abandoned. With that race, exposed to the wrath of God, our Lord became one. That wrath was an abiding fact, and our Lord, as the representative of the race, was under the necessity of

[1] Ne deperiret humanum genus.—*Adv. Hæreseis.*

[2] *Cur Deus Homo?* ii. 4.

meeting it. Sin having entered, the only way to the fulfilment of the spiritual possibilities of mankind lay through the representative expiation of sin, homage to the law of righteousness, surrender to God, which the death of Him who is the true spirit of mankind consummated. By means of the righteousness which demanded that honouring of the law, and of the love which paid it, by means of the spirit in which the offering was made—a spirit which was both the revelation of God and the realisation of the true life of man—sinful men are brought to realise, in and through Christ, that life of sonship which Christ in His life and death expressed for them as being their spiritual life. Take away the demand of the divine righteousness and its satisfaction on the cross, and though a new and unfallen race might conceivably have been brought to the life of sonship as revealed in Christ, this would have been impossible for sinful men, for neither would the work of the divine righteousness and wrath have been done upon their consciences, nor would there have been any all-sufficient sacrifice to evoke their penitence and faith, and to utter them to God.

The most truly "moral theory" of the Atonement is that which represents it as making and meeting a moral claim of the righteousness of God upon sinful man. The mystical, and yet moral, relation of the cross of Christ to the spiritual life of men must never be left out of sight when the question of the necessity of satisfaction is being discussed. When the spiritual and moral qualities of sonship are borne in mind, it may be affirmed that for a sinful race the only way to realised sonship lay through satisfaction. Even as related to our

Lord Himself this may possibly be true, though on this subject it is necessary to speak with the greatest caution and reverence. The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that He was made "perfect through suffering." Was the perfection so acquired ministerial or moral—necessary to the discharge of the high priestly office, or to the character of the High Priest? Is it not needful to go below this alternative? Can there be any qualification for such an office which is not spiritual and moral? And if the experience of suffering were necessary to perfect for the office, must this not have been because it was necessary to perfect the character of Him who undertook the office? It would seem that the answer to the last question must be in the affirmative; namely, that without His experience of suffering, our Lord's character would not have been developed and matured to that highest perfection of which it was capable. If this seem strange to any, when our Lord's sinlessness is considered, it must be remembered that our Lord "laid not hold on angels, but on the seed of Abraham," and that He therefore inherited those natural characteristics of the race which had been modified by the history of previous generations. May not the condition of that inheritance have been that, even for Him, sinless though He was, the way to absolute and realised perfection lay through those ordinary conditions of discipline which are part of the universal government and education of the human race, as it is at present known? It would seem that this must have been so, if, as it should be, the Incarnation is understood to be the real assumption by the Son of God of existing human nature, and not of abstract, but unreal, humanity.

But whether our Lord's death be conceived as wholly an expiation for sin, or as also the completion of His own discipline, it remains true that in it is manifested the full glory of that filial spirit of which the Incarnation was the dawn. The whole spiritual and ethical content of the Passion, as well as of the Incarnation, has positive value apart altogether from the necessity of expiating sin. And the positive meaning and value of the Incarnation is crowned by the Passion. To say this is to adjust the relations of the Incarnation, and of the cross, to the work of salvation. It becomes impossible to disparage the Incarnation as a mere means to the expiation of the cross. Equally is it impossible to exaggerate the Incarnation, the full meaning of which can only be seen in the sacrifice of the cross. The material of the Passion is the supreme expression of the eternal life which was manifested in the Incarnation.

It is the perception of this positive value of the facts of redemption as being, apart from sin, the fulfilment of the true life of humanity, and the satisfaction of the fatherly heart of God, that has led to the discussion whether the Incarnation would not have taken place, even if man had not sinned. It was on this ground that the question was first raised by the two mediæval writers, Ruprecht of Deutz and Duns Scotus. The former laid it down that as it would be absurd to suppose that, had it not been for sin, the foreordained number of mankind would not have been created, so it is also absurd to suppose that "the Head and King of all elect angels and men" would not have had, apart from sin, a supremely necessary cause for becoming man, when we are told in

Proverbs that He would have His delights with the children of men.[1] Duns Scotus argued that as predestination by God to glory must be held, strictly speaking, to precede the foreknowledge of sin, this must above all be true of Christ, who was predestinated to the highest glory; and that as God wills first in order that which is nearest to His end, so He wills glory to Christ before He wills it to any others of the predestinated, because Christ is nearer to His end than they are.[2] Hence, according to him, it results that the Incarnation would have taken place in any case, although had it not been for sin, our Lord would not have come as a Redeemer.

The whole subject is profoundly interesting and profoundly difficult. The question naturally arises as to how far God could allow sin to alter fundamentally His dealings with mankind, and especially whether it is conceivable that sin should be the occasion of securing a manifestation of the love of God which would otherwise have been withheld. Again, when the wonder of grace, the glory of revelation, the fulfilment of human nature, the perfect union of God with man, contained in the Incarnation are considered, it may well seem as though the design of

[1] The principal passage is as follows: "Cum ergo de sanctis et electis omnibus dubium non sit, quod nascituri forent omnes usque ad præpositum numerum secundum propositum Dei, quo ante peccatum benedicens, 'Crescite,' ait, 'et multiplicamini' (Gen. i.); et absurdum sit putare, quod propter eos, ut nascerentur, peccatum necessarium fuerit; quod de isto capite et rege omnium electorum angelorum et hominum sentiendum, nisi quod et ipse maxime causam necessariam non habuerit ipsum peccatum ut homo fieret, ex hominibus delicias suæ charitatis habiturus cum filiis hominum" (Prov. viii.).—Ruprecht of Deutz, *Commentary on St. Matthew*, bk. xiii.

[2] Duns Scotus, *In Sent. Pet. Lomb.*, lib. iii., *dist.* vii., *quæst.* iii., *scholium.*

creation would have been incomplete without it. The ordinary answers to these suggestions seem hardly conclusive. We are told, first of all, that the advent of our Lord is always connected with sin in Holy Scripture. Even if this were the case, it would scarcely settle the matter, for, as we have seen, sin having entered, whatever our Saviour was or did was by way of remedying or making reparation for sin. But the assertion does not appear to be true. The prophecies of the Messianic king in the Old Testament do not stand in any necessary relation to sin; and in the New, the great passage in the Epistle to the Colossians, which tells us that all things "have been created unto Christ,"[1] is an exception to the general rule. Nor is the further objection satisfactory, that the condescension of the Redeemer in coming to save the world would be lessened had it been His purpose, independently of sin, to become incarnate. For the wonder of His love is seen in His mercy towards a *sinful* world, in His alliance with a *fallen* race, in His submission to their sinful opposition, and to the awful experience of the Passion on their behalf. It is all this that constitutes the greatest marvel of His condescension.

Perhaps it is impossible to arrive confidently at any conclusion on the whole subject; but the following propositions seem certain: First, sin did not bring about the relation of mankind to the Son of God, for this is involved in the original constitution of human nature. Secondly, the Incarnation, in the fulness of its revelation of God, in its fulfilment of the spiritual possibilities of man, in the perfect union of God with man, reveals a purpose which

[1] Col. i. 16.

was both anterior to sin and would have been fulfilled had sin never entered into the world. Thirdly, this would have been attained either by a special Incarnation of the Son of God, or by such a vivid manifestation of Himself in and to sinless men, so intimate a union with them, so mighty a spiritual energy in them, as would have exhibited in and to all men the self-same spirit of condescension as has actually been displayed in the Incarnation. Had the Incarnation been withheld from a sinless world, it would not have been that the divine revelation, the intimacy of fellowship between the Son of God and men, the perfecting of humanity in fellowship with God, should have been less, but that in essence what has been done by the one special Incarnation in "the man Christ Jesus," and by His ever fuller indwelling in the hearts of believers, should have been done universally, and, of course, without the humiliation of the Passion and its antecedents.

The greatest inducement to adopt the view under discussion is, that its opponents have too often seemed to assume that a sinless race would not have needed, or been blessed by, the indwelling and revelation of the Son of God; that it would have stood independent of Him before God, and therefore in externality to God; and that there would have been no such display of grace towards it as seems necessary in order to reveal Him who is love. Such a view satisfies neither the teaching of Holy Scripture nor the deeper spiritual aspirations of Christian hearts. That the demand which such aspirations make would have been satisfied to the full, had men never sinned, we may be sure. Of the exact method by which this would have been done we may stand in doubt. But as it is, the need

is met by the Incarnation and the cross. These are the fulfilment in Christ, and potentially in all men, of the ideal which satisfies the fatherly heart of God. As being this, they have positive spiritual meaning and value, apart from their expiatory merit. Indeed, it is this eternal meaning and value which gives to them their expiatory merit. And this complete satisfaction of the ideal and purpose of the Father is the final end of the propitiation in the death of Christ.

But that which satisfies God redeems man. And this other side, though in certain respects beyond the scope of our present inquiry, must have some notice.

The words "ransom" and "redemption" are familiar to us in the New Testament writings. Our Lord speaks of giving His life "a ransom for many."[1] St. Peter and St. Paul connect "redemption" inseparably with *the Blood* of Christ. When we pass from the language which speaks of the captivity of sin to the Epistle to the Hebrews, which, in accordance with the conceptions of the temple, speaks of its defilement, we are taught that the "blood of sprinkling"[2] is at once the ratifying bond of the new covenant,[3] and the means of cleansing[4] from defilement. And St. John bears witness to the same truth, when he tells us that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."[5] Here the Old Testament declaration, "the blood is the life," must be held to apply. And the life is not the mere animal life, but the whole of that life, with its spiritual glory, which our Lord offered up in death. The blood of Christ stands, therefore, for all that

[1] Matt. xx. 28. [2] Heb. xii. 24. [3] Heb. x. 29.
[4] Heb. ix. 14. [5] 1 John i. 7.

He did and was in His death. It is on this ground that it is "precious," availing with God, powerful over men. Its redemptive power is twofold. By its satisfaction to God it is the ground of the forgiveness of sins; by the revelation contained in it, and the influence exerted by it, it is the inspiration and energy of a new spiritual life in those who receive the forgiveness of sins.

Further, St. Paul tells us of a special redemption of those who were subject to the law. "When the fulness of the time came," he says, "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."[1] The Mosaic law represented the law of righteousness, so far as it could be expressed in instruction, in precept, and ordinance, and this at a particular stage of the world's history and to a particular people. But it represented the law of righteousness in the stage of externality, as a more or less alien and despotic authority, enforced by external sanctions. Christ redeemed us from it by satisfying the law of righteousness, which it represented, and delivered us from its external authority by enthroning its archetype —the law of righteousness—in our hearts by means of the Spirit of adoption. Thus our Lord's redeeming work, accomplished in the satisfaction of the law, is consummated by the bestowment upon us of that filial spirit in which He both made satisfaction to the law and fulfilled the spiritual possibilities of mankind.

We have now arrived at the goal of our inquiry

[1] Gal. iv. 4, 5.

Throughout we have found perfect agreement between the principles of fatherly satisfaction and the redemptive facts of the Incarnation and the cross. And, further, both are in accordance with the teaching which our expository study in chapter iii. has shown to prevail throughout the biblical doctrine of the Atonement. That teaching is, that the ground of reconciliation is in the death of Christ, but in His death as being made, by the spirit in which it was endured, a sacrifice, the last identification of Himself with mankind, the fullest surrender of trust in and obedience to the Father, the supreme homage to the law of righteousness. The facts, and the relationships out of which they grow and to which they correspond, throw light upon the texts, and these again confirm the interpretation which has been placed upon the relationships and the facts.

And now we are in a position to answer the old questions which have been so often discussed. The Atonement is not an ordination of the bare will of God without intrinsic relation to the salvation which is effected by it. It is not a satisfaction to the personal rights or to the affronted majesty of God. The fundamental condition of fatherly satisfaction is, that it shall satisfy the fatherly by perfecting the filial. By virtue of his fatherhood, the father is the guardian of the law of righteousness, which protects the family bond of love and fellowship. And this principle, as we have seen, has its supreme exemplification in God's dealings with mankind in the cross. The satisfaction offered perfects the filial response of Him who offers it, and of them, in Him, for whom it is offered. This will be seen more clearly when we

consider the relation of justifying faith to the spiritual principle of the Atonement.[1]

But this response could not have been perfected in believers had not the awful majesty of the law been vindicated and the heinousness of sin marked as it has been in the death of Christ, which is the outward manifestation and assertion of all that the Spirit of God inwardly reveals as to sin. Thus that which the holiness of God demands is required also in the spiritual and moral interests of mankind. Had the demand been waived, not only would the glory of the divine holiness and the authority of the divine law have suffered, but the highest interests of mankind would have been ignored. The holiness of God, the law of God, are not abstract entities. The holiness of God represents the attributes of His character, as manifested in all the relationships into which He enters. His law guards the integrity of those relationships. And the salvation of man is spiritual and moral salvation, brought about by his entrance into and correspondence to the relationships for which he was created. The death of Christ alone is the complete satisfaction of those relationships on behalf of a guilty race; it alone is the means by which each individual apprehends, and, by penitence and faith, again enters into those relationships which sin has transgressed. And thus the satisfaction of God, the satisfaction of the law, and the satisfaction of human nature form an indivisible whole. All are in common met by the atoning death of Christ. Had the demand of any one of them fallen to the ground, that of the others must have fallen

[1] See chap. ix.

with it. Had the death of Christ been withheld, not one, but all of these great ends would have been unsecured.

This is to establish the necessity — above all, the necessity on fatherly grounds — of the Atonement. It is, further, to affirm that the Atonement is neither a "super-abundant" satisfaction, as Thomas Aquinas considered it, nor a nominal one, acceptable simply because God chose to accept it, as Duns Scotus represented it. Its correspondence with and fulfilment of the spiritual relationships and needs out of which its necessity arises, prevent it from being either the one or the other. It is a "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world"; neither more nor less. Indeed, when the matter is spiritually conceived, neither more nor less is imaginable; for to impute either excess or defect is to do dishonour to God, who makes the demand, and the presence of either would be harmful to mankind, who are represented by it. But, indeed, quantitative categories must, of necessity, be misleading in dealing with such a subject. It is the quality and not the quantity—if the latter expression may be excused for a moment, as forced upon us by the views which we are opposing—of the Atonement which makes it well-pleasing to God. And that quality is the ideal fulfilment of the demand which God makes in virtue of both His nature and that of men, and in virtue of the relationships between Him and them.

But there is another question. If God be wroth against sin, and demand a satisfaction in order to the forgiveness of it, how can it be that He Himself satisfies His own demand? To some this seems impossible, and even absurd. Dr. Dale, for example, speaking of the

description of the death of Christ as a ransom, asks: "Was it paid to God Himself? That hypothesis is incoherent; God Himself provided the ransom, He could not pay it to Himself."[1] That it should be demanded by God and yet provided by God, that it should be the gift of mercy and yet turn away wrath and bring about forgiveness!—can we explain these seeming contradictions? It is not surprising, let us say at once, that Dr. Dale found the difficulty insuperable. Directly the law of righteousness is made abstract and independent, as is done in the last resort by Dr. Dale, the demand for satisfaction, if made by God Himself, becomes a narrowly personal demand, and it is obvious that such a demand cannot at once be made and met by the same person, not even by God. But if the account of the relations of God to law, and of law to man, set forth in this chapter be accepted, and if it be remembered that the wrath of God not only co-exists with His love, but is a particular manifestation of it directed against that which would destroy its fellowship, then surely the matter is relieved of its difficulty.

For, in the first place, that God should require and at the same time provide an Atonement, presents no difficulty not already present in all action of His which respects spiritual and moral distinctions. To suppose that in His dealings with men God takes no account of their spiritual and moral condition is only possible to those who conceive of Him as indifferent to that condition. But if, for example, God incline towards the sinner who repenteth, is not the testimony of every religious mind that He both requires penitence and

[1] *On the Atonement*, p. 357.

gives it? If it should be replied, that God indeed gives the power of penitence, but that what He takes account of and rewards is the use made of the power, a twofold answer must be given. First, when God turns in mercy to a penitent, He is not rewarding the exercise of the power to repent as being meritorious, but is taking advantage of a spiritual condition in the penitent which enables him to receive the divine mercy. And, on the other hand, it is true that God gave His own Son in the Incarnation; but the succeeding "obedience unto death" of the incarnate Son is His own free act, representative and meritorious only because rendered under the general conditions of human freedom. Even if the formula *non posse peccare* be preferred to *posse non peccare*, it must yet be held that the impossibility of sinning is spiritual and moral, and is maintained by the infallibility of free choice, and not by the abrogation of free choice. Therefore the same difficulty which is held to exist in the way of God both demanding and providing a satisfaction for sin appears to hold against both His demanding and taking account of any spiritual grace whatsoever, for all such come from Him. The combination of demanding and providing is the same in each.

But, further, does not human fatherhood give us a very real analogy so far as the spiritual conditions, which make it possible for God at once to demand and to provide satisfaction, are concerned? Does not a father take part in all satisfaction rendered by an offending child? Do we not know constantly of father meeting child, suggesting the filial response, well-nigh forming it in the child, so going out to the child and identifying himself

with him as almost to lead the child as a penitent into his own presence, while, notwithstanding this, there is the dark cloud of wrath in the background on the father's side, and that of punishment in the background on the child's? Here the wrath is present and the demand is maintained, while yet the father procures and associates himself with the filial response, and would even provide it were this possible, and could the response, were it thus provided, be appropriated by the child. Doubtless such an analogy but imperfectly illustrates the great matter of the Atonement. But the help it affords is real. The gift of the Son, as Consummator and Redeemer of mankind, is necessary to salvation. God, whose love seeks the restoration and fulfilment of mankind, and whose wrath burns against their transgression and shortcoming, gives His Son, as indispensable to the fulfilment of His purpose of love and to the turning away of His wrath. When the Son who is given becomes incarnate, it is apparent from all that has been previously said, that the bearing of sin on our behalf is necessary to Him. God is wroth with a race that misses the mark for which He created it; yet only His gift of His Son can bring about its fulfilment of the ends of its creation, and this only through the atoning death which both gives full expression to the loving purpose and mercy of God, and turns away the wrath that is the manifestation of love against the sin which defeats its gracious ends. Thus the greatness of the demand is the measure of the grace.

As we behold the awful, yet glorious, satisfaction made by our Representative upon the cross, and see in it the realisation of the ideal of man by Him for Himself, and

for us in Him, we cry, "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable GIFT." A perfect and final sacrifice is made therein for the sins of the race which is one in Him. "God was in Christ reconciling *the world* unto Himself." And, because of the unity of the race in Christ, His sacrifice, atoning for the race, becomes the mighty means of its own reproduction in all the justified, for they are "crucified with Christ." The world is reconciled as organically related to Christ; the blessings of reconciliation become the portion of each individual who by penitent faith is "in Christ Jesus." Thus the twofold relation of the Atonement to the race and to the individual is expressed by the apostle's saying, that God is "the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe" (1 Tim. iv. 10). In this gradual appropriation of a salvation already gained for mankind the dawn of a new day, heralding the noontide splendour, drives before it the dark night of sin and death. The multitude of those who find redemption through the death of Christ cry, "Salvation unto our God which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb." And the whole creation raises the great acclaim, "Amen: blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

CHAPTER VI

THE ETHICAL PERFECTION OF OUR LORD

THE sinlessness of our Lord, regarded negatively, is necessary to any doctrine of the Atonement, His positive moral perfection to any doctrine—such as that of the preceding chapter—which treats the moral elements of the Atonement as essential to the satisfaction of God.

For the general Christian consciousness, and even beyond it, that perfection is unquestioned and unquestionable. The worship paid to Christ throughout the ages has been a worship in which moral homage and spiritual aspiration have predominated. The wholeheartedness of the worship has been in direct proportion to the moral elevation of those who have offered it. The progress of religion, reason, and civilisation among men, while it has taught them to understand Christ better, so far from causing them to grow dissatisfied with their allegiance to Him, has added a tribute of moral appreciation which has become profounder for each increase of their spiritual insight. Still more, the testimony of the most saintly and heroic has revealed, without exception, that their devotion to Christ made them what they were, and that they won their crowning victories in the consciousness that they were following Christ, deriving from Him both the ideal they pursued and the inspiration and

strength by which they pursued it. This is sufficient evidence for most men; or, if it need reinforcement, they are satisfied to quote such testimonies from those who are outside the Church as that of the late John Stuart Mill: "Nor even now would it be easy even for an unbeliever to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life."[1] But in recent times our Lord's ethical perfection has not been allowed to rest unchallenged both on particular and on philosophical grounds, and it is necessary for us to look these objections in the face.

Before doing so, however, a preliminary word must be said. Such a discussion, like that of chapter ii., cannot fail to be more or less distasteful to many Christian believers. Their instinctive reverence makes them shrink from regarding our Lord's perfection as a question for argument, which, of course, involves the holding of that which they unquestioningly believe in a kind of suspense, until the conclusion of the argument is reached. And this shrinking of the devout mind is not altogether without importance in establishing that conclusion itself; for the highest spiritual intuitions and instincts of the heart are reasonable, although they are often too subtle and complex to be easily uttered in words. But why, such will ask, should the whole question be raised? The answer is, that it is not we who have raised it. In part, it has been directly raised by opponents of the Christian faith. In part, it is indirectly involved in many of the current philosophical discussions on the moral nature and evolution of mankind.

[1] *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 255.

It is impossible permanently to exclude the question as to how far our conclusions as to humanity generally bear upon the possibility or the results of the Incarnation, and when the question is raised it must be answered, not only in the interests of those who feel the difficulty, but in those of the truth itself. Our Lord Himself enjoins this attitude upon us, by His own example. "Handle Me," He says to the affrighted disciples; "Reach hither thy finger," to Thomas in his scepticism: showing that the truest reverence towards Him is our confidence that our faith about Him can justify itself when exposed to all the tests that can fairly be applied to it, and our willingness to expose it to those tests whenever the spiritual interests of men are endangered by intellectual difficulty or doubt. He Himself uttered the challenge to His adversaries, "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?" (John viii. 46.)

But another question may be raised. How far, it may be asked, can the ordinary standards of human morality be applied to One whose personality is divine? Is He not exempt from obligation to fulfil those standards? or, if at any point His conduct diverges from them, may it not have been motived by transcendent considerations to which we have no clew? The raising of such objections shows serious misapprehension of the whole subject. To begin with, our Lord Himself makes no claim to such exemption. His discourses exhibit a constant endeavour on His part to justify to His opponents His conduct on principles which they would recognise as ordinarily valid. Moreover, as we shall see more fully in the following chapter, human nature is, by its original constitution, so related to the Son of God, that when He becomes incarnate He enters into a

nature naturally fitted to receive Him and to manifest Him, without violating any of its characteristics. And, even had this been less completely the case, the assumption of human nature carried with it the obligation to respect the nature assumed. As we have already seen in chapter ii., the human nature which our Lord took to Himself in the Incarnation is thereby selected by God to lay down the terms alike of the Father's commission and of the Son's obedience; so that both the one and the other must lie within the limits which the normal relationships of human nature to God, to men, and to the world set up. And, finally, the whole Christian view, which regards our Lord as the pattern, the exemplar of mankind, requires that His humanity be at once ideal and normal. Each of thes is equally important, if He is to be an example. His humanity must be ideal, if it is to be for ever the worthy object of the worship, the aspiration, and the imitation of mankind. But equally necessary is it that it should be normal, that it should so come under ordinary conditions, fulfil ordinary relationships, and be subject to ordinary obligations and limitations, as to belong to the same moral order as that under which the men who are called to follow Him live. It is therefore of the highest practical importance to us to establish, when challenged, the mutual compatibility of this ideality and normality.

Sufficient has now been said to prepare us for entering on the discussion. In doing so, it may certainly be claimed that particular fault-finding with our Lord's character has had little enough success. The attempt most familiar to English readers is that of Mr. F. W. Newman, in his *Phases of Faith.* The chief impression

produced by it, besides that of a certain lack of reverence, is the inadequacy of the writer, in both intellectual and moral breadth and depth, for dealing with the great subject which he has proposed to himself. The fault-finding, for the most part, is petty and inconclusive. The most important charges of wantonly provoking death by going up to Jerusalem, and by His conduct when there, have been dealt with in chapter ii. His attempt to find fanaticism of view or unworthiness of spirit in some of our Lord's answers to His enemies, in the motives of His parabolic teaching, in His failure to repudiate the possession of miraculous powers, in His seeming opposition to the acquisition and enjoyment of material wealth, appear to depend entirely on narrowness of interpretation or on presuppositions which strike at the root of the whole of the gospel history.[1] But his conclusion shows how profoundly Mr. Newman is at fault in solving the historical problem. He says: "It cannot be shown that any one believed in the moral perfection of Jesus who had not already adopted the belief that He was Messiah, and therefore Judge of the human race." Such a statement is almost a precise inversion of the facts. It was the immeasurable moral impression produced by Jesus on the disciples which, if it was not originally alone in bringing them to faith in His Messiahship, sustained them in that faith, although His Messianic ideal and theirs were so unlike, and His course, both in the spirit which shaped it and in the experience which befell Him, so unexpected, that discipleship for them was one long process of disillusionment. Our Lord's spiritual influence brought to His disciples a

[1] *Phases of Faith*, ninth edition, pp. 139–164.

satisfaction which not only went far towards contenting them with the postponement of their Messianic ideals, but to a large extent transformed those ideals. That they confessed Him the Christ was simply the supreme triumph of His spiritual and moral influence over their preconceptions, prejudices, and worldliness. Of course, Mr. Newman may, and does, contend that the moral impression produced by our Lord did not justify His disciples in concluding that He was perfect, but only that He was better than they. The full discussion of this objection must be reserved for the moment; but meanwhile it is sufficient to say that the testimony of the disciples at least establishes two things: first, that our Lord, by the glory of His own moral standard, immeasurably uplifted theirs; secondly, that, as far as they observed, His conduct never fell below the standard He set forth.

But if it was the claim to be the Christ which, according to Mr. Newman, imposed upon our Lord the demand that He be morally worthy of His office, and therefore led to the assertion of His perfection by His disciples, it is just that claim which for Dr. Martineau is incompatible with His perfection; partly because our Lord so transcended the Messianic ideal that its adoption by Him could not be other than unworthy, but still more because the self-assertion imputed to Him in the gospels is offensive to Dr. Martineau's moral sense. But his reverence forces him to find a way out of the difficulty without surrendering the perfection of Christ, and hence he denies the historical accuracy of the offending portions of the narratives. In order to establish this denial he sets up three canons by which the narratives are tried,

and the result is that all which offends him is satisfactorily expelled as unauthentic. These three canons are:

1. "Whenever, during or before the ministry of Jesus, any person in the narrative is made to speak in language and refer to events which had their origin at a later date, the report is incredible as an anachronism.
2. "Miraculous events cannot be regarded as adequately attested in presence of natural causes accounting for belief in their occurrence.
3. "Acts and words ascribed to Jesus which plainly transcend the moral level of the narrators, authenticate themselves as His; while such as are out of character with His spirit, but congruous with theirs, must be referred to inaccurate tradition."[1]

It is evident that the result reached by these canons will vary according to the presuppositions—theological, philosophical, and historical—of each critic who accepts and applies them. The first raises the greatest question of New Testament criticism, namely, the date of the language (the word, of course, being used in a larger than the mere philological sense), and to this the most various answers have been given. The second, again, will be applied with widely differing results; the natural causes by which Dr. Martineau accounts for the belief in the resurrection, for example, appearing to others utterly insufficient to explain it. And the third, which for our present inquiry is the most important, teems with difficulties. Even granted that we have a common judgment as to the moral level

[1] *Seat of Authority in Religion*, bk. v., p. 577.

of the narrators, the utmost diversity arises directly we attempt to determine what is "out of character with" our Lord's "spirit, but congruous with theirs." It certainly seems a highly arbitrary proceeding to form an ideal of the character of Jesus from those sayings of His which are in accordance with the critic's mind, and then to rule out the rest because, if admitted, they would clash with the critic's ideal of Him, and tend to lessen the reverence felt for Him. And while allowing for the possibility of misapprehension, misreporting, and accretion, the operation proposed seems most hazardous when the sayings to be condemned form an appreciable proportion of the whole. Most of them, indeed, will be found on examination to rest upon those claims to authority on the ground of Divinity and Messiahship which Dr. Martineau dislikes and pronounces spurious. Those who admit the claims will not quarrel with the sayings, while those who dispute the former may not be as ready as Dr. Martineau is to deny that our Lord made them in order to preserve Him as an object of reverence. And, once more, Dr. Martineau finds time for the play of those tendencies which his canons are to detect only by accepting the latest possible dates suggested by the Tübingen school for the New Testament writings, against the judgment of more recent and moderate critics.

But the anxiety of Dr. Martineau to sacrifice the special, personal claims of our Lord in order to maintain His ethical perfection raises, for those who believe that He made those claims, the important question, Does the self-assertion of our Lord, based upon His divine nature and His office as Redeemer, injure the perfection of His

humanity? Especially, is it compatible with the humility and self-forgetfulness which are essential to our conceptions of human goodness? The answer surely must be that any one whose person or office is necessary to a great cause must assert himself—himself in relation to his office—and his office, just so far as fidelity to that cause demands, and that there need be no lack of humility in so doing. Deficiency and excess are alike blameworthy. The self-assertion, of course, must not be that of selfish ambition, but of the minister of God in the service of men. Doubtless liability to special temptations is connected with the duty of such self-assertion,[1] and the instances in which a great mission has been marred by egotism and ambition are so numerous and melancholy that men shrink from the self-assertion, because the danger involved therein is so great and so invidious. Yet to neglect the duty for fear of the danger is not humility, but cowardice; while all needful self-assertion becomes harmless, so long as the proper spiritual relationship to God is preserved. If this position be generally sound, its application to the case of Christ disposes of the objection of Dr. Martineau. True, the self-assertion of our Lord has no parallel elsewhere—at least, among sane and good men. But if His self-assertion is unique, so are His person, His office, His importance to mankind. It is in the light of His person and His work

[1] It is, perhaps, unfortunate that it should be necessary to employ in this connexion a word which has contracted so many disagreeable associations owing to human selfishness. But there is no other available. And, in the sense explained here, it is impossible to deny that a duty of self-assertion is often laid upon men if they are to be faithful to the trusts committed to their care. Part of the duty of bearing witness to the truth is the claiming of that position which is necessary in order to safeguard the ends of the truth.

that His self-assertion must be understood. If He be not the divine Redeemer of mankind, His self-assertion would be not so much wicked as insane. But the general principle just laid down as to all self-assertion is sufficient to show that our Lord, in giving necessary, and not excessive, expression to His relationship to God and man as the Christ, in no way violated the essential conditions of human goodness and humility. And where His claims are most strongly enforced, there is the most abundant proof of His self-surrender to His Father and of His solicitude for men.

We now pass to the general philosophical objections which may be urged against our Lord's ethical perfection. These we shall find most clearly brought before us in the writings of Strauss and of the late Mr. T. H. Green. By Strauss they are polemically urged against our Lord's personal claims. Mr. Green, on the contrary, simply lays down certain general philosophical propositions, without any express application of them to our Lord. But their effect may be pressed none the less against belief in our Lord's ethical perfection. Not perhaps to His sinlessness of intent, but to His realisation of any such perfection as would warrant us in treating Him as an adequate revelation of God in humanity. Mr. Green, as is well known, regards miracles, whether in the natural or in the moral order, as impossible, and therefore would not except Christ from the limiting conditions which he holds to affect ordinary men. It is therefore necessary to examine how far such conditions do actually limit mankind, how far they put ethical perfection beyond reach, and how far the miracle of the Incarnation necessitated that our Lord should transcend them, and enabled Him to

do so without sacrificing the reality—the normality—of His human nature.

Both Strauss and Green are the offspring of the German transcendental philosophy, and it will therefore be well for us to glance briefly at the bearing of that philosophy on Christology, and especially at the influence of Hegel, its greatest representative, upon Strauss.[1]

It has been the signal merit of modern German philosophy that it has appreciated the importance of religion as a fact, has realised the necessity of taking serious account of it, and has sought to construe its meaning in relation both to the truth of the universe and to the spirit and life of man. By all its greatest thinkers, therefore, Christ is seen to be of the highest importance, as having completed the idea of religion, and by His influence largely secured its acceptance among men. Kant and Fichte, from a prevailingly ethical point of view, Schelling in a more speculative way, sought to interpret the significance of Christ. Space will not allow of more than this bare mention of these names, but with Hegel we are more intimately concerned.

Strauss, in the early part of his career, came under the influence of two teachers, who towered above their contemporaries — Schleiermacher in religion, Hegel in speculative philosophy. Schleiermacher was occupied with the nature of religion,—which, he contended, was natural and essential to man, and distinguished from theology or morality as being the feeling of dependence upon

[1] Only a bare sketch can be attempted here. For a masterly treatment of the whole subject, the reader may be referred to Dr. A. M. Fairbairn's great work, *Christ in Modern Theology*.

God, — and with Christianity as the final manifestation of religion. For him, as the subject is presented in his *System of Doctrine*, the ripest fruit of his thought, Christianity is the religion of redemption,—that is, its end is to effect deliverance from the state of spiritual alienation from God, and inner strife, into which the natural man has fallen; and Christ the Redeemer is to be understood by means of the Christian community, which owes its existence to Him. The reality, the greatness, the permanence of its consciousness of redemption it owes to its continuous spiritual relationship to Christ; and the nature of the effect enables us to learn the nature of the cause, which must be adequate to produce it. The Christian community subsists in conscious relationship to and dependence upon Christ, and He, the creator of its characteristic consciousness, is of necessity its archetype, realising completely in Himself that which He produces in believers, and therefore consummating by His perfection humanity, which but for His perfection and its own participation in it would be incomplete. As its archetype, it is necessary that He should at once stand in the closest connexion with mankind, and yet be sinless. Tempted to sin, indeed, He was; but His temptation affected only His sensibility, and introduced no strife into the region of the will. Both the sinlessness of His example and our sense of guilt on account of sin are evidence that sin does not belong to human nature as such, but is accidental. Yet the sinlessness of Christ in such close contact with sinful humanity is a moral miracle, involving the special cutting off from Him by God of all sinful influences derived from human descent. And, as His

sinlessness was produced by the special act of God, so it is sustained by the special power of His consciousness of God, which means the special presence of God in Him, by which His whole life is determined. Thus Christ stands out unique: as sinless, though in organic relation to mankind, as completing human nature in Himself, and reproducing Himself in His followers by means of their living fellowship with Him.[1]

Under the influence of such teaching about Christ, His archetypal perfection, the reality of the experience of redemption which He bestows, and the necessity of abiding fellowship with Him in order to its production and maintenance, Strauss came to Hegel for his philosophy of religion. With Hegel, intellectual interests were predominant. Religion is for him the figurate (roughly speaking, the imaginative) representation of the transcendental ideas of the Spirit. Christianity is the religion of reconciliation of man with God, as that is understood by the Hegelian philosophy. According to its account, man, who is essentially spirit, falls in the first stage of his history into the otherness, the estrangement and strife of nature and self-will. In awaking to, and becoming engrossed in, the life of nature, he realises his life as being in opposition to God. From this sense of estrangement

[1] *Glaubenslehre*, §§ 86–105. For all this, Pfleiderer charges Schleiermacher with the "immense misunderstanding" of "confounding the fundamental fact from which a religion proceeds with the fundamental view of the religion itself" (*Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. trans., vol. i., p. 339). In answer to which objection we may confidently ask in passing, How could the perfect revelation of the Father be given, except through the perfect filial consciousness of the Son? And upon what could that perfect filial consciousness rest, except upon a perfect character responding to, and completely realising the requirements of, that highest relationship?

and opposition he is brought back to spiritual reconciliation by coming to recognise the essential unity of divine and human nature.

But in order to this recognition the advent of One who completely realised in Himself this essential unity is necessary. Men must see a man who is at once divine and human, in order that they may put away from their minds the thought that there is any opposition between the two, and may learn that they are, in reality, one. The one Man who did realise this and showed it to men was Christ, and therefore Christianity is the absolute religion, embodying and bringing home to the consciousness of men the true relations between God and man. "This implicit unity (of man with God) exists," Hegel says, "in the first place, only for the thinking, speculative consciousness; but it must also exist for the sensitive, representative consciousness,—it must become an object for the world,—it must *appear*, and that in the sensuous form appropriate to spirit, which is the human. *Christ has appeared*,—a man who is God, God who is man,—and thereby peace and reconciliation have accrued to the world."[1] Hence it follows that for Hegel, as Dr. Fairbairn well says, "the main thing was the consciousness, not of the historical Christ, but of those who held Him to be the God-man."[2] He was concerned not so much with what Christ was, as with what men saw in Him. The abiding spiritual relationship to Christ, which was all in all to Schleiermacher, was unimportant to Hegel.

[1] *Philosophy of History*, p. 335, Eng. trans., 1872; see also *Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. trans., vol. iii., pp. 72 *seq.*

[2] *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 221.

When the appearance of Christ had enabled men to apprehend the real unity of God and man, His spiritual office was discharged. Henceforth the fact that this revelation was made in Him is but of historical importance. When the truth is perceived, the Person of Him through whom it is perceived becomes of comparatively small account, for men come to perceive the truth apart from Him. So far as He continues of importance, it is as the bearer of an idea which men have beheld in Him.

This view of the matter enabled Hegel to pass by the question of the sinlessness of Christ, without giving any decided judgment upon it. He justifies his indifference to the historical reality in the following words: "We do not adopt the right point of view in thinking of Christ only as an historical, bygone personality. So regarded, the question is asked, What are we to make of His birth, His father and mother, His early domestic relations, His miracles, etc.?—*i.e.* what is He, unspiritually regarded? Considered only in respect of His talents, character, and morality,—as a teacher, and so forth,—we place Him in the same category with Socrates and others, though His morality may be ranked higher. But excellence of character, morality, etc.—all this is not the *ne plus ultra* in the requirements of the Spirit—does not enable man to gain the speculative idea of spirit for his conceptive faculty. If Christ is to be looked upon only as an excellent, even impeccable individual, and nothing more, the conception of the speculative idea, of absolute truth, is ignored. But this is the desideratum, the point from which we have to start. Make of Christ what you will, exegetically, critically, historically; demonstrate as you

please how the doctrines of the Church were established by councils, attained currency as the result of this or that episcopal interest or passion, or originated in this or that quarter,—let all such circumstances have been what they might, the only concerning question is, What is the idea or the truth in and for itself?"[1]

But for Strauss this indifference to the historical fact was impossible. Not only had he a keener interest in the historical question as such, but he was confronted by the miraculous Christ of Schleiermacher. He was therefore obliged to furnish an interpretation of Him, according to Hegelian principles, as he understood them. The first *Life of Jesus* was the result. Nature and man being part of the eternal process of the self-realisation of God, miracles were held to be impossible. But the ethical perfection of Christ in the midst of such an unfinished process would be a miracle of the greatest magnitude. It is therefore impossible. How, then, is the belief in the Incarnation and perfection of Christ to be accounted for? Here the Hegelian explanation of religious beliefs as the figurate representation of underlying spiritual ideas comes to the help of Strauss. The New Testament affirmations about Christ belong not to Him as an individual, but to the race as a whole. It is the race which is the Son of God, the true Incarnation of God. All that was now needed to complete the explanation was the introduction of the mythical hypothesis, to show that the miraculous features of the gospel history are due to the action of the religious imagination, localising and individualising universal truth in a particular man.

[1] *Philosophy of History*, p. 337.

During the long period of controversy to which the appearance of the *Life of Jesus* gave rise, the views of Strauss underwent various modifications. By the time that the *New Life of Jesus* was published, the transcendentalism of Strauss had given way, and had been replaced by empiricism; but the new foundation served equally well to support the old conclusions as to our Lord's perfection. He says in a passage which effectually begs the whole question:

"The human hero of a biography is a being partly natural, partly spiritual; one whose lower impulses and selfish aims ought in duty to be held in subordination to the universal law of reason, not one whose tendencies are already and necessarily so controlled in consequence of a union of humanity and divinity. Hesitation and failure, struggles between the senses and the reason, between selfish and general aims, are incidental to every human life; and although the disturbance arising from this inward warfare may vary infinitely in degree, from the wildest tumult of the passions to the most insignificant interruption of their repose, still its absolute exclusion, as supposed in the Church doctrine as to the sinlessness of Christ, must be fatal to any true conception of humanity.

"Moreover, even the most highly gifted of human individuals is always influenced by the conditions of the particular circle in which he lives and moves. He belongs to a special family, age, and nation; his soul, however independent and self-centred, is fed on the one hand, and on the other limited by the nature and degree of the culture so derived; his aims are swayed by surrounding circumstances, and are hence exposed not only to obstruc-

tions in their execution, but also to indefinite modifications and improvements resulting from maturer experience."[1]

To the same effect, and in the same empirical way, Mr. F. W. Newman says: "I cannot conceive of any human person rising out of obscurity, and influencing the history of the world, unless there be in him forces of great intensity, the harmonizing of which is a vast and painful problem. Every man has to subdue himself first, before he preaches to his fellows; and he encounters many a fall and many a wound in winning his own victory. And as talents are various, so do moral natures vary, each having its own weak and strong side; and that one man should grasp into his single self the highest perfection of every moral kind is to me, at least, as incredible as that one should pre-occupy and exhaust all intellectual greatness."[2]

The late Mr. T. H. Green, on a higher plane, and with loftier spirit, sets forth substantially the same conclusions in his *Prolegomena to Ethics*; though, as has been said, without applying them to our Lord, and with the important reservation, already indicated, that he disputes rather the realisation of the ethical ideal than the possibility of sinlessness of intent. The following passages (from the chapter on "Characteristics of the Moral Ideal") must be quoted at length:

"Through certain *media*, and under certain consequent limitations, but with the constant characteristic of self-consciousness and self-objectification, the one divine mind gradually reproduces itself in the human soul. In virtue of this principle in him man has definite capabilities, the

[1] *New Life of Jesus*, authorised trans., p. 2.
[2] *Phases of Faith*, ninth edition, p. 142.

realisation of which, since in it alone he can satisfy himself, forms his true good. They are not realised, however, in any life that can be observed, in any life that has been, or is, or (as it would seem) that can be lived by man as we know him; and for this reason we cannot say with any adequacy what the capabilities are." [1]

"Any life which the individual can possibly live is at best so limited by the necessities of his position, that it seems impossible, on supposition that a divine self-realising principle is at work in it, that it should be an adequate expression of such a principle. Granted the most entire devotion of a man to the attainment of objects contributory to human perfection, the very condition of his effectually promoting that end is that the objects in which he is actually interested, and upon which he really exercises himself, should be of limited range. The idea, unexpressed and inexpressible, of some absolute and all-embracing end is no doubt the source of such devotion; but it can only take effect in the fulfilment of some particular function in which it finds but restricted utterance. It is, in fact, only so far as we are members of a society, of which we can conceive the common good as our own, that the idea has any practical hold on us at all; and this very membership implies confinement in our individual realisation of the idea. Each has primarily to fulfil the duties of his station. His capacity for action beyond the range of those duties is definitely bounded, and with it is definitely bounded also his sphere of personal interests, his character, his *realised* possibility. No one so confined, it would seem, can exhibit all that the spirit, working through and in him, properly

[1] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 189.

and potentially is. Yet is not such confinement the condition of the only personality that we know? It is the condition of social life, and social life is to personality what language is to thought. Language presupposes thought as a capacity; but in us the capacity of thought is only actualised in language. So human society presupposes persons in capacity—subjects capable each of conceiving himself and the bettering of his life as an end to himself; but it is only in the intercourse of men, each recognised by each as an end, not merely as a means, and thus as having reciprocal claims, that the capacity is actualised, and that we really live as persons."[1]

"Thus it is equally true that the human spirit can only realise itself, or fulfil its idea, in persons, and that it can only do so through society, since society is the condition of the development of a personality. But the function of society being the development of persons, the realisation of the human spirit in society can only be attained according to the measure in which that function is fulfilled."[2]

From all these passages it will be seen that four conditions are laid down by one or other of the writers, as governing the ethical character of men, which, accepted as they stand, would make our Lord's ethical perfection impossible.

1. That the communication of God to humanity is an eternal process of gradual advance, the goal of which has never been reached, and can never be reached, in the case of any individual.

2. That, on the human side, the general conditions

[1] *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 192. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 201.

under which alone individuality is possible, necessarily limit it to such an extent as to make it impossible for any individual to realise the ideal of humanity.

3. That a perfect environment is necessary to a perfect character, and that therefore the appearance of an absolutely perfect man in so imperfect an environment as that of Jewish society in the time of our Lord is impossible.

4. That what we consider evil is a normal and necessary stage of the development of character; that therefore to suppose our Lord to have escaped it is to destroy His human reality, and to leave only a shadowy ideal.

It is not sufficient to make the general reply to these objections that the Incarnation is a miracle, and that, granted the miraculous, anything becomes possible. The doctrine of the Incarnation is that the divine Son of God became "perfectly"—that is, completely—man; and it is involved in this that He came under the general conditions of human life. If, then, ethical perfection is either essentially contrary to human nature, or is impossible under the necessary conditions of human life, then to affirm that our Lord was perfect is to deny that He was man. If perfection and humanity are incompatible with one another, we can affirm either of our Lord, but not both; and in cleaving to the doctrine of His humanity we must surrender His perfection. We must therefore examine the four conditions laid down, in order to discover how far, if legitimate, they affect the possibility of our Lord's spiritual and ethical perfection.

1. It is asserted that the communication of God to the creature is a gradual and eternal process, the goal of

which is never adequately reached. Miracles are therefore contrary to the divine method, and, not least so, a moral miracle so stupendous as the realisation of the ethical ideal in the character of Christ. This statement derives most of its plausibility from the impression made upon the imagination by the marks of gradual evolution in nature and man which modern science has discovered, and from the experience of slow and orderly becoming which attends the growth of the finite mind. The impression made by these has, for the time, obscured the other and complementary side. But epochs of creative advance are as real as periods of gradual development. The introduction of life, the appearance of the animal, the advent of man, are instances of such advance which may well prepare the mind to believe in the reality of a supernatural Christ. No doubt scientific inquiry may be able to discover the natural working of old causes, in special collocations and under favourable conditions, to produce these new effects. It may become possible to show that, in certain circumstances, the antecedent, inorganic substance would be succeeded by the organic, the vegetable would pass into the animal, even the animal become the ancestor of the man, without our being able to detect the addition from without of any element not previously existent or active in the universe. If this should turn out to be the case, the result would have no force in establishing an atheistic conclusion, except for those who might misunderstand its significance. It would only necessitate either our conceiving the relation between the Creator and the creation to be more immanent and vital than we had previously supposed, or our claiming more for a pre-arrangement of

phenomena from the beginning than had hitherto been thought necessary, and would give a crowning demonstration that the world is the product of a self-revealing divine reason and life, and not of an arbitrary or mechanical will.

But even allowing such a large assumption as to the future result of scientific investigation, two things remain certain, and for our argument they are all-important.

First of all, evolution needs, for its interpretation, to be regarded in its last analysis as the result of an ever-active divine will, no less than as the manifestation of the divine reason. To banish all that is arbitrary and mechanical from the operation of the divine will is to exalt and not to dethrone it. And the universe stands in as direct a relationship to the will as to the reason of God. Its existence and order can only be explained by inference from the nature and effects of our own powers. If the validity of such inference be disputed, agnosticism is the result; for agnosticism is simply the declaration of inability to explain the universe, on the ground that all conclusions as to the attributes of God drawn from the faculties of men are invalid; and that therefore, since we have no other clew, its secret is unknown and unknowable. If, on the other hand, the validity of such conclusions be admitted,—as is certainly the case with Mr. T. H. Green,—then will becomes equally important, as a factor of the explanation, as reason; for the effects which we produce need for their accomplishment not only the conception of the intellect, but the fiat of the will. And the world, as a divine effect, is not only the object of the thought of God, but the product of His

will,—a will which is active in the creation as well as in the maintenance of the universe, and the most necessary factor in all its progress. That the nature and order of the universe are what they are is due to the divine reason; that this nature and order have an actual existence is due to the divine will. And it is the idea of the determining activity of the divine will which is endangered by the general transcendentalism of Mr. Green, with its excessive emphasis on the purely intellectual factors of the solution.

In the second place, whatever may be the natural history of the momentous advances which have taken place at great epochs of the world's history, at least the result is something altogether new. That which emerges at each fresh stage of development is a new thing, taking up into itself the old, but transcending it, possessed of larger powers, in order, by fuller mastery of its environment, to lead a larger life. The connexion with the past, and the advance upon it, are equally real throughout; but, at the attainment of the new stage, it is the latter which predominates. The more therefore we allow due weight to this element of advance, introducing new and higher forms of existence, the more shall we be prepared to believe in the possibility, on the divine side, of a special Incarnation of God, and on the human, of a special perfection of man, provided they stand in an intelligible relation to what has gone before.

Again, when we come to the field of human history, we find that the transcendent personality is as essential to progress as the gradual evolutionary advance. Everywhere, in the realms of religion, thought, art, statesmanship, government, we are face to face with the work of personalities,

who have so profoundly modified the beliefs, the thoughts, and even the habits of their fellow-men, that they may fairly be called creative. Their work has stood in need of the manifold influences which made their appearance possible, and insured their success when they did appear. Its results have been perpetuated, and even made organic, in the race by a gradual assimilation. But the men themselves were spiritually, according to the measure of their importance, "without father, without mother." Yet more, their achievements have, at times, apparently exhausted the possibilities of human nature in the particular province of life in which they wrought. The perception of beauty among the Greeks, the governing faculty among the Romans, the reverent apprehension of holiness among the Hebrews, certainly approached, if they did not realise, the ideal in those particular directions. And these special tendencies of highly gifted races have had their fullest embodiment in representative individuals; for example, Plato and Pheidias among the Greeks, Julius Cæsar among the Romans, deutero-Isaiah among the Hebrews. The advance of humanity consists chiefly in imbibing from them the power to see, to apprehend, or to do, as they did, and to combine the various gifts which they have bestowed, in a civilisation more many-sided, but, perhaps, also more commonplace.

If this be a true account of the divine method in nature and in history, does it seem incredible, or does it not rather seem to be most in accordance with that method, that One should appear in the fulness of time who lifts humanity to a higher plane in the spiritual realm; who, while striking deep roots into the past

makes a beginning absolutely new; who gives supreme expression to, and exhausts, the religious and ethical possibilities of human nature, and brings into the world new divine influences which it is the business of the remaining dispensation of the world to absorb and to set forth?

It is true, of course, that the closest analogies are at an immeasurable interval from the Incarnation, and the spiritual perfection which the Incarnation brings to pass. And the foregoing argument is simply intended to point to such analogies. But they are important. For some it may be sufficient to regard the Incarnation as a miracle so transcendent that they neither expect to find, nor are prepared to welcome, anything analogous in the ordinary working of God. The Incarnation is so unique that, even if it represented an act of God in direct contradiction to His ordinary working in nature or man, this would create no difficulty for them. But others, while equally convinced that the Incarnation is a transcendent and strictly miraculous event, yet look out upon the universe expecting to find some continuity of method, uniting the Incarnation with what has gone before, and especially when they learn that the whole world was constituted by and with regard to Christ (Col. i. 16). And the predominance of the doctrine of evolution, with its proofs that the development of nature, inorganic and organic, of man, and of society, has been by gradual processes of almost imperceptible advance through countless ages, has so filled their imagination as to incapacitate it for perceiving and doing justice to the other side. Hence the Incarnation, with the consequent ethical

perfection of our Lord, stands out to their mind as the direct counter of the divine method elsewhere, and creates an increasing difficulty for a rational faith. For such the existence of periods of special advance in nature, of creative personalities in history, of typical races and individuals, who realise the highest possible perfection in this or that department of human life, does provide a principle of continuity for the history which is consummated in the Incarnation, and does make the realisation by our Lord of the ethical possibilities of humanity more congruous with the universal expression of the mind and purposes of God, and therefore, because more consistent with the general method of God, more certainly true.

Just as the little hills clustering at their foot make the towering Alps more intelligible, so the Incarnation is made more intelligible—whether as the supreme condescension of God, or as the supreme uplifting of man—when we recognise it as the highest and unique example of a method of working which has always been in operation, and which varies in degree directly as the greatness of the epoch. If expression has been given to the distinctive genius of different races by extraordinary personalities, is it a strange thing that complete expression should be given to the spiritual strivings of mankind, or that where, in the former case, the personality is extraordinary, in the latter case, where interests so much more vital are involved, it should be strictly miraculous?

2. We have next to consider whether the necessary limitations imposed upon individuals by their having to fill a particular place, and to discharge a limited function in a complex society, render ethical perfection impossible.

Mr. Green apparently considers that they do. He says: "Each has primarily to fulfil the duties of his station. His capacity for action, beyond the range of those duties, is definitely bounded, and with it are definitely bounded also his sphere of personal interests, his character, his realised possibility. No one, so confined, it would seem, can exhibit all that the spirit, working through and in him, properly and potentially is." Of course, if in order to spiritual perfection it be necessary so to pass through all the particular experiences of all members of the race as to recapitulate them all, and to possess every aptitude, theoretic and practical, which such experiences produce, then perfection is manifestly impossible. But it becomes necessary to inquire carefully, first, at what point, and to what extent, limitations of position and function in human society impair the realisation of character; and, secondly, to what extent they thus operated in the case of our Lord.

To begin with, it is evident that none of the limiting conditions inherent in individuality touches in the least the possibility of that perfectly good will and sincere heart which are the conditions of all moral perfection. Once let these be given, and there is nothing in the constitution of society, in itself, to impair them. Their presence in our Lord must be matter of general evidence, and cannot be dismissed on the ground of any *à priori* impossibility.

But, further, all such limitations as have been alleged have to do rather with the intellectual and practical aspects of life than with the moral. The extent to which such aspects affect the moral interests needs careful examination. But, on the whole, it may be laid down

that, while the intellectual and practical are individual, the moral is universal. The range of life varies for different men; the conditions under which temptations arise, moral conflicts are waged, and victories won differ, but the conflict and the victory are essentially the same, no matter what may be the differences of race, station, social functions, or intellectual characteristics. The character which the discipline of life tends to produce in the true of heart is fundamentally the same, and especially where, amid all divisive influences, the religious consciousness is the same. The qualities connoted by the names of the virtues are the same for all Christian men, and, notwithstanding all differences of work and temporal outlook, the ideal, which they reverence in Christ, is the same, and lights them on their various ways to a common destination.

Doubtless there is a point at which specialisation—for example, extreme division of labour—operates to the disadvantage of the spiritual and moral life, partly by the weariness inflicted by it, and partly by shutting out those broader and more inspiring interests which freshen and invigorate all the springs of life. Such injurious effects have long engaged the attention of moralists and social reformers, and have suggested the question whether the most economical arrangements for the production and distribution of wealth may not be bought too dear, at the cost of too intense and monotonous an activity of certain faculties, especially intellectual and physical, and the consequent atrophy of the rest. Short of such an extreme, sufficient specialisation is necessary to the development of character. Insufficient specialisation is as harmful as its opposite. And, for the formation of character, it is further

necessary that the specialising influences of work shall be subordinate to, yet linked with, the broadening influences of common human life, with its relationships to God, men, the world, so that the influences of work contribute the stimulus and discipline, but not the tyrannous environment, of spiritual and ethical life. The degree of limitation rendered necessary by the social organisation of humanity varies directly as the complexity of that society. It is great in a highly articulated society like ours; it is scarcely felt in the simple life of which we read in the pages of the Four Gospels. There special work and common life seem to stand in those healthy relations which it is the problem of social reformers to restore to modern society under our present industrial conditions. And the degree of limitation varies there, as elsewhere, according to the vocation of the individual. It is greatest in the scribe, in the fisherman, the taxgatherer, and the like; it is least in the case of the prophet. It is the special function of the prophet to live as the seer and witness of universal spiritual truth, to apply that truth to the various problems of human life, in all its changefulness, which present themselves to him; while he himself lives a simple human life, unlimited by any such practical task as may tend to narrow the outlook and specialise the powers of ordinary men; subject, indeed, to stimulating and disciplinary conditions of life in a pre-eminent degree, yet left free to the predominant influence of those universal interests of life which evoke and broaden the spiritual nature. This prophetic calling is, indeed, highly special; but not in such a way as to narrow the outlook of the mind, the sympathies of the heart, the intensity and

breadth of the purposes which enter into the spiritual and moral tissue ; or, on the other hand, to separate from that stern, practical discipline by which character is stimulated, tested, and developed. And of all such prophetic lives, that of our Lord was clearly the simplest, profoundest, and most universal.

3. As to the necessity of a perfect environment to a perfect character, it must be admitted that the environment affects the particular manifestation, and may retard the complete realisation of the spiritual and ethical life. But it may do this without influencing in the least the perfect sinlessness and the intrinsic capabilities of the character. To take the case of our Lord, we may grant at once that our Lord's conduct would have been different in a different world, that its colour has been given to it by the relations in which He stood to imperfect disciples, to the publicans and sinners who were the objects of His compassion, and to the unscrupulous and relentless foes whose opposition affected the whole of His ministry and brought about His death. We may even, perhaps, admit that the earthly conditions of our Lord's life may have, to some extent, prevented the complete fulfilment of all its possibilities. We cannot say that it was so, for we have no experience of any world of fuller and larger environment than that with which we are acquainted. Our speculations on this subject have little more practical weight than those as to the existence of aspects of the world which would be revealed to us if we were endowed with additional senses the form of which we cannot image to the mind. But, supposing that a more perfect environment would have called forth a higher and more marvellous revelation of

character from our Lord, still this does not affect in the least His ethical perfection relative to that particular environment in which He lived. The test is, given the time, place, surroundings of our Lord, can His spirit and conduct be found wanting at any point? or do they ideally fulfil the demands which His environment made upon Him? The general consensus of mankind confesses that they do. And this confession is not all. It is agreed that the example of Christ remains a sufficient guide for us, notwithstanding all the improvements of our environment brought about by the progress of nearly two thousand years, and that, forecasting the future from the past, we cannot conceive of a time when that example will cease to be as relevant and as sufficient as it is to-day. Surely this is the only perfection which it is necessary for us practically to consider, and its presence is the guarantee that, whatever more perfect environment the future may have in store either for Christ or for us, His character will naturally respond to its requirements.

On the other hand, it must be contended that men are by no means helpless creatures of their environment, but that to a large extent they themselves create it. The attraction and repulsion exercised by a commanding personality tends to give to it the environment needed for the full manifestation of its powers. It not only selects, but draws out, the spiritual capacities which are in affinity with itself. And this is pre-eminently true of the influence of Christ. In the process which led to the calling of His disciples, our Lord drew to Himself the men and women who served for the manifestation of the grace that was in Him.

And, lastly, not only did the influence of Christ attract to Him the most favourable spiritual environment that was available, but the Providence which ordered His advent in the "fulness of the times" prepared His environment for Him. Indeed, that is involved in the very phrase, "the fulness of the times." Instead of degrading Christ, with Strauss, to the level of an ordinary environment, the facts compel us to elevate the environment to the spiritual possibilities of Christ. Once we believe in the unique glory of our Lord, our eyes are opened to perceive how divine was the preparation of the world for Him, how divine was the provision of His immediate environment through the appearance and ministry of His forerunner, and the adhesion to our Lord of the disciples trained by the Baptist, and how divinely the continuation of His influence was secured by the three great apostles, whose successive influence built up a catholic Christianity—St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John.

4. The fourth general objection is that evil is necessary as a stage in the development of character. Strauss and Mr. F. W. Newman have argued this empirically, as we have seen. It is philosophically stated by Hegel in the following way:

"For while man posits himself as subject, as this particular being, his will is, in the first place, merely this particular will, is filled with what belongs to singleness, with particular impulses and inclinations; *i.e.* the natural man is self-seeking. Evil, accordingly, is not a struggle in which man engages with a foreign power, nor a conflict of man's reason with the alien power of sense; nor is it merely a defect of power in the consciousness of God as

against the sensuous consciousness; no, it is the inner self-contradiction of the spirit, the contradiction of its existence and separate state as an individual subject and its universal nature as spirit. Hence evil accompanies human freedom from the first as the first mode of its manifestation. Freedom contains in itself the essential moment of that division; it arises in the feeling of independent existence over against other being, even against the universality and reasonableness of the will. 'In this division independence is set up and evil has its seat; here is the source of evil, but also the point from which atonement ultimately arises. It is both the beginning of sickness and the source of health.'"[1]

If this be true, sin, as we ordinarily speak of it, is, of course, a misnomer. Sin, by its definition as rebellion against God, and against the divine law which represents not only His will, but our true life, is that which ought not to take place. The utmost that can be said, according to the doctrine now before us, is that what we know as sin is right as a stage, but wrong as a result—a factor in the process of *becoming* good, which is cancelled when the state of *being* good is attained. Of course, if we adopt this position, the problem of our Lord's perfection is greatly modified. If evil and self-will be necessary as a stage towards good, and if our Lord successfully passed through that stage, and, having perfectly overcome the inner strife, attained and maintained Himself in the higher good, then, according to this philosophy, He may fairly be called

[1] This summary is quoted from Pfleiderer, *Philosophy of Religion* (Eng. trans.), vol. iv., p. 106. See Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion* (Eng. trans.) iii. 33–100.

perfect, though perfection turns out to be different from what we had thought it.

But this account of the moral nature must be disputed by all who attach due importance to the consciousness of guilt. The idealism of Hegel first transferred the dialectic of human reason, with its threefold process of affirmation, negation, and reconciliation, to the universe, explaining thereby its becoming, and then extended it from the reason to the moral life of man. But, in so doing, Hegel seems to have left out of account all that is most distinctive of the moral life. Certainly particular virtues are in no way prepared for by their opposites. There is nothing in the nature of hate to make it a moment in the production of perfect love towards any person; nay, there is everything in it to modify the love that may succeed it by elements of self-abasement and reparation, which are not only not of the essence of love, but impair the purity of its manifestation. Or, take the example of the grace of purity. There is nothing in its opposite which tends to produce it. He who regains purity after losing it may perhaps grasp it more tenaciously, but it can never be the more radiant for his sin. Rather, the purer he becomes the more chastened by a contrition of spirit, which is itself conclusive evidence that for the moral consciousness precedent evil is no condition of subsequent good. And if this be so as to particular virtues and vice, why should it be different with the underlying spiritual conditions out of which they severally spring? It is one thing to pass through successive and even more or less contradictory stages in the *recognition* of a virtue, and another to pass through contradictory stages in the *practical fulfilment* of

a virtue, or obedience to the command which enjoins it upon us.

Doubtless man has to affirm the right in the presence of, and in preference to, possible wrong, and to recognise that to a degree he is his own, in order to present himself to God. In this way his character is built up and made his own; for character and consecration do not grow like the hair of the head, but are won by acts of choice. Temptation presents an evil alternative to us as we pursue the good, lays upon us the necessity of deliberate choice of good, and by such choice the good becomes securely ours. And thus temptation is made by God to serve the spiritual interests of those who are exposed to it. It was so even in the case of our Lord. The filial spirit, which we have seen to be the distinctive characteristic of His life, was affirmed, and therefore made doubly His own, under the experience of real temptation. It is clear, from the narrative, that the three suggestions of the tempter struck at the three constituents of the filial spirit—trust, obedience, loyalty; and would have substituted for them their opposites—self-indulgence, self-assertion, and worldly subservience. The first set up the necessities of physical life as the paramount concern, to which all powers might be directed, instead of satisfaction in the Father, sustaining confidence in the Father. The second sought to put presumptuous self-assertion, forcing the hand of God, in place of obedient following of the Father's leading. The third represented the spirit of cowardly homage to the tyranny of the world, instead of the self-sacrificing loyalty which would win and hold the world by and for God. Yet while the apprehension of an alternative by the imagination, and the attractive-

ness of that alternative to some side of human nature, is involved in temptation, the deflection of the will towards it, or the absorption of the spirit in it, is not necessary to the perfecting of the character, but distorts it. Of any such deflection or distortion in our Lord's case the narrative of the temptation shows no trace.

Once more, to the objection put in the empirical form in which Mr. Newman has stated it,—namely, that there must be in an influential man "forces of great intensity, the harmonizing of which is a vast and painful problem," involving "many a fall and many a wound,"—the answer is, that, however this may ordinarily be, the unique influence of our Lord arises from the fact that He is in complete contrast with this, that there are no forces in Him seeking to make a particular selfish impression, or to claim for Himself a merely individual glory among men; but that all His intensity is Godwards, and that from this single-hearted devotion springs naturally a peace, a balance, a harmony, a patient meekness and gentleness, which attract the world to Him, simply because in His meekness and lowliness of heart He neither strives nor cries, does not bid for recognition, silently living a life which, by reason of its greatness, cannot miss recognition. His mastery is the other side of His devotion, His calmness towards men the other side of His concentration upon God; and thus He must be interpreted in the light of the self-devotion of the saints, who have found their life by losing it, and not of the self-control of the conquerors of mankind, who have mastered their own impulses in order to dominate their fellow men.

We have now reviewed all the objections which may

be urged on philosophical grounds against the possibility of our Lord's ethical perfection, and conclude that the question cannot be dismissed by any *à priori* consideration, that there is nothing in the essential conditions under which men live which renders impossible the appearance of One who is spiritually and morally perfect, provided that the miraculous be admitted. The truth of the matter must be decided by the examination of His own self-consciousness and of the spirit of His life. As to the first, the impression made upon us is, that while none has ever been so profoundly conscious of the perfection of God, none has ever stood before God with such filial confidence, with such total absence of penitence and contrition as our Lord. His declaration, "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him" (John viii. 29), expresses the characteristic consciousness of His life. On the ground of a unique relationship to God, determined by both His Sonship and His sinlessness, He distinguishes from first to last between Himself and His disciples. He stands out in contrast to the other great religious teachers of mankind in this, that they found a way of salvation for themselves, and showed it to their followers: our Saviour wrought out salvation for others of which He stood in no need Himself. He gives His life "a ransom for many," His blood is shed for the "remission of sins"; but clearly He needs neither ransom nor remission, and the very fact that He interprets His own death as redemptive proves that He was totally without consciousness of sin.

The only saying of Christ which can possibly be set on the other side is His reply to the rich young man, who asked Him what good thing he should do in order

to have eternal life. "Why callest thou Me good? none is good save one, even God" (Mark x. 18; Luke xviii. 19). It is alleged that by this answer our Lord intended to convey a sense of His own unworthiness to be called good; that when He called One good, He intended to disclaim for Himself participation in His goodness. But this assumption is too hasty. The total impression produced by the narrative is that the inquirer, while sincere and earnest, yet sought eternal life as an external blessing which could be secured by some special external achievement, and that he applied to our Lord as to an easily accessible authority, who could communicate to him the merely practical secret which he sought. His attitude towards eternal life, towards the "good thing" by which it was to be attained, and towards our Lord as the authority who was to answer his question, was essentially defective and almost secular. It was in the consciousness of God, and in the awe, reverence, aspiration, and penitence which that consciousness creates, that the young man was lacking. And therefore our Lord, striking at the root of the evil in him, seeks to make him realise for the first time that for all he seeks he has to do with God. Hence it was necessary to withdraw his attention even from Christ, that it might be fixed upon God; and our Lord, in His solicitude for the young man's salvation, spares no language which is necessary to the end He had in view. This seems the natural explanation of the saying, and to press it as a repudiation of perfection by our Lord shows that hard and narrow dogmatism in the exposition of texts is a failing by no means peculiar to orthodoxy. The same explanation applies

equally to the version of our Lord's answer given by St. Matthew, "Why askest thou Me concerning that which is good?" (Matt. xix. 17.)

The total impression made by the self-consciousness of our Lord is that of perfect peace, untroubled by any sense of sin; and this is the more wonderful, because it is accompanied by an unexampled apprehension of the inwardness, the spirituality, and the eternal obligation of the law of God.

But how far is the self-consciousness of our Lord verified by the spirit of His life? Two things are necessary to ethical perfection, if we waive the unpractical question of some future, higher environment than we can conceive at present. The first is the possession of the absolutely good will, ready unfailingly to choose and do the right when it is discovered, unfaltering in bearing the consequences of so doing. And this is clearly present in the life of Christ from first to last. But, in the second place, the perfect spiritual apprehension of and conformity to the relations which determine the spiritual and moral life are necessary to perfection, as distinguished from mere sinlessness of intent. Perfection is not an abstract quality, but the right apprehension of and response to the realities of the universe to which the spirit of man stands related. Let the relations be truly conceived, and the obligations which those relationships impose be entirely fulfilled, and herein the conditions of ethical perfection are complete. The three great realities with which each one is brought into contact are God, man, the world. Let there be any dulness of apprehension, or any feebleness of response to any one of these three, so far as it conditions spiritual

and moral action, and imperfection is the result. Obviously this is so in the latter case, but no less truly in that of imperfect apprehension, because, if the apprehension be imperfect, something must needs be wanting in the spiritual temper which should answer to and reflect the realities which condition our spiritual being. Such truth and adequacy of apprehension guarantee and include that each great reality shall be seen in its true relationships to the others, and especially that God shall be revealed in and through man and the world, being indeed the constitutive principle in both.

The character of our Lord must therefore be tested by the way He apprehended the relationships in which He stood to God, to men, and to the world, and by the extent to which He satisfied their claims. Let us take them in order. The briefest outline is all that can be given here, for it is clearly impossible to attempt a detailed examination of our Lord's life. All that can be done is to indicate the lines on which such an examination should proceed.

1. First of all, as we have seen, our Lord apprehended the divine Fatherhood, and saw in it the determinative relationship of God to Himself. And this in the most spiritual way. There have been doctrines of the divine Fatherhood which have been so purely physical as to render any high spiritual development impossible; but with Christ the highest spiritual conceptions of the Old Testament as to God are surpassed. His worship, law, and kingdom are all spiritualised by the fatherly and filial relationship they express. And with this spiritual and ethical conception of God two things result from His

Fatherhood. First, the supreme demand for ethical life is made upon His sons. "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Secondly, it is recognised that this ethical demand is made on the ground of, and as a manifestation of, fatherly love. Now this is the highest conceivable relationship of God to man, well entitling Christianity to be called the Absolute Religion. And as our Lord perfectly apprehended the Fatherhood of God, so He perfectly realised the life of Sonship. The spirit of worship—trust, obedience, service, —was maintained by Him equally in prosperity with its temptations, and in adversity the most bitter which ever man encountered. He exhausted the possibilities of the filial relationship.

2. In the second place, in His relationship to men our Lord was the ideal Elder Brother of the race. At the foundation of all His relations with men was a profound reverence for human nature, even in publicans and sinners, as beloved and sought out by God and capable of the highest spiritual life. It was this faith in human nature which was at the heart of His ethical demands upon men, of His compassion for those who in ignorance and sin failed to realise them, of His indignation against those who hindered their realisation in their fellows. This intense preoccupation with the spiritual redemption and advancement of mankind made our Lord fearless without defiance, humble without poorness of spirit, absolutely sincere, and caused that every want of men which He encountered called forth from Him some new manifestation of patient, ungrudging service, revealing the many-sided glory of His character. But if the concern of Christ

for men was intensely spiritual, it was no less broadly human. The bodies of men, their common relationships, their daily work, even their innocent conviviality, their government, customs, civil and ecclesiastical institutions, all were sacred in His eyes. He chose His disciples from the common people. He revealed the higher spiritual capabilities of women, as the story of Martha and Mary among others shows. And His spirit was catholic. It is true that for the purposes of His life-work He was sent to the house of Israel; but it was the court of the Gentiles from which He drove the traffickers, and He hailed the coming of Greeks to see Him as heralding the hour of His glorification.

3. In the third place, He recognised the purity of the world, its spiritual affinities, as His parables show, its subservience to the kingdom of God. He read its lessons and rejoiced in its beauties in such wise as to sanction all the poetic and philosophic interests of men. Recognising the world as God's, He lived out a human life in it with perfect harmony of spiritual mastery, and with perfect freedom from all narrowness and asceticism.

Thus, to this day, in whatever province of human life men move, whatever duties they may have to discharge, by whatever special interests they may be swayed, so long as those interests be true, they may find the revelation in the living Christ of the ideal principles by which their temper and conduct should be inspired. And in Him all has the glorious symmetry of true proportion. All things are seen in God, and God in all. What is this but to say that Jesus Christ is perfect man?

CHAPTER VII

THE RELATIONSHIP OF OUR LORD TO THE HUMAN RACE

It will have been observed that the treatment in chapter v. of the satisfaction made to God on account of sin by our Lord Jesus Christ assumes throughout that our Lord stands in such a spiritual, and even organic, relationship to the human race that He is its natural and eternal representative; that His suffering for sin, His response to the Father, may be taken as belonging ideally and eternally to the human race, and as having the power of spiritual reproduction in those who believe in Him. According to this view, it was not possible for any one to atone for us even if his dignity and condescension were sufficient, but there must be in addition an eternal relationship which makes the doing and suffering of Christ, relative to us, that of Another who is yet not another. This has perfect devotional expression in the lines of the hymn:

> Soul of my soul remain!
> Who didst for all fulfil,
> In me, O Lord, fulfil again
> Thy heavenly Father's will.

The nature and evidence of this relationship, as being of so great importance for our subject, must therefore be examined. But in entering upon this examination a two-fold caution is necessary. First, the subject is extremely

difficult, going down to the very roots of being, and it cannot be made easy to the general reader. And, secondly, while it is necessary, on philosophical grounds, to endeavour to exhibit the nature of the relationship, any failure to do this satisfactorily should not prejudice the belief in the reality of the relationship itself. The profoundest question upon which the mind of man can be exercised is that of the relationship of God to man, of the divine nature to the human. The subject can no more be ignored than can any other of the supreme questions presented to speculative thought. But at present any solution can be only approximate, an incentive to further thought, and not a discharge from the necessity of it.

So much having been said, we may approach the subject at once, reverently and fearlessly, making the statements of Scripture our starting point, and seeking to discover what those statements imply and what is the nature of their confirmation.

To begin with, that there is an original spiritual organic relationship between our Lord and mankind the New Testament declares. As the doctrine first meets us in the writings of St. Paul, our Lord is called the Second Man, to whom mankind owes its spiritual, as it owes to Adam its natural, life and unity (1 Cor. xv.). According to this, our Lord stands second to Adam in succession, for in the divine order we are told "that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual" (1 Cor. xv. 46). But even here there are signs that more remains to be revealed. In contrast to the first man Adam, who "became a living soul," the last became "a lifegiving spirit"; and whereas "the first man is of

the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven." Herein is clearly set forth a unique spiritual relationship to mankind, and in the words "of heaven" a special relationship to God is implied as its ground. In the epistles of the imprisonment this doctrine has its final and fullest expression. The Epistle to the Ephesians is largely occupied with the mystical relation of Christ to His Church and with the history of God's dealings with mankind, regarded as the choice, fore-ordination, creation, and redemption of believers *in* Christ. The Epistle to the Colossians goes further, and bases the special relationship of Christ to His Church upon His general and eternal relationship to the universe. "In Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (Col. i. 16). Existing before all things, Christ is the agent of their creation, the end of their being, the principle of their existence, and the bond of their coherence.

The teaching of the Logos doctrine of St. John is substantially the same. The original relation of the Logos to creation is the foundation of His revealing, lifegiving, redemptive ministry for men.

This apostolic doctrine has close affinity with the meaning conveyed by our Lord in the title which He selected for Himself: "The Son of man." As used by Him, it is evidently not a humble recognition of His own frailty, as with Ezekiel, but a claim to kingly headship, as in Daniel. This claim, however, is no less evidently connected in His mind with the consciousness that He embodies

human nature, possesses its true characteristics, tastes its essential and its ordinary experiences, and is in vital sympathy with all its possessors.[1] The consciousness that He realises humanity, and has perfect kinship with it, is bound up with Christ's claim to be Master and Lord. A broad and deep sense of human kinship marks His use of the title. It is further likely that our Lord intended by this title to hint at His pre-existence, which, according to many critics, is never asserted by Him in the Synoptic Gospels. For the description of Daniel vii. makes against an ordinary earthly origin of the "one like unto a son of man," who receives the everlasting kingdom from the hand of God, for we are told that he "came with the clouds of heaven." Moreover, pre-existence would naturally attach to the conception of Christ as the Ideal Man. Indeed, this is expressly stated in the fourth gospel: "No man," John iii 13 tells us, "hath ascended into heaven, *but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man.*"

How did the apostles come by the belief expressed in the prologue to St. John's Gospel and in Colossians i.? Dr. Dale well says as to this: "It is probable that the apostles were led up to this conception of the relation between Christ and the universe by their consciousness of the relation between Christ and themselves, in which they believed that the ideal relation between Christ and the human race was receiving its fulfilment. From the relation between Christ and the human race the transition to the relation between Christ and the universe was not difficult. The whole conception had an ethical and

[1] For a careful account of our Lord's use of this title, see Dr. A. B. Bruce, *The Kingdom of God*, chap. vii.

spiritual, not a merely metaphysical, origin. They reached it, not by *à priori* speculation, but by an orderly development of spiritual thought, controlled and directed by the Holy Ghost. Their thought took its departure from what they knew for themselves about their own relation to Christ, and was enriched at point after point by the constant remembrance of the great fact that Christ was God manifest in the flesh."[1] It is evident that the apostolic doctrine that the place of Christ in redemption is due to His prior relation to the universe and man as their creator and sustainer, is no mere abstract or artificial dogma. Just as our Lord's claim to headship is associated with the consciousness that He embodies humanity, and, by the full possession of it, represents it, so the perception by the apostles of His organic relationship to men and of His world-importance would seem to rest upon, and to be given to them in their prevailing consciousness of His spiritual lordship and of His redemptive power over their own hearts and lives.

The following features mark the finished apostolic doctrine: First, if not more explicit in principle, at any rate it is more fully elaborated, and its consequences more fully stated, than any teaching to be found in the sayings of our Lord. Moreover, it bears signs of development. It is most explicit where the specifically Christian experience is profoundest, and has its fullest statement in the latest and maturest writings, when, that is to say, time has permitted reflection upon the external facts of our Lord's history, and upon the internal facts of experienced redemption to do its work and reach

[1] Dr. R. W. Dale, *The Atonement*, seventeenth edition, pp. 407, 408.

its ripest conclusions. Again, the whole is closely involved, as the apostles expound it, with their teaching as to the redemption which is in Christ; and the doctrine is introduced with the air of immediate knowledge, rather than as the surpassing secret of a special revelation, or as the result of a process of deliberate reasoning.

What conclusion are we to draw from these facts? Surely that it is the natural deduction, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, from their knowledge of our Lord's unique relationship to the Father, and from the contents of their own experience of Him as Redeemer. The inference from both the one and the other lead on to the same conclusion. His relationship to the Father carried with it His creatorship and His unceasing relationship, both to the universe which He had created and to mankind as its culmination. And, on the other hand, Christ could not have taken up the place which He did in their spiritual life as Saviour, and effected what He did, had there not existed beforehand a natural relationship between Him and them—nay, had He not been the Creator and eternal Lord of those whom He redeemed and in whose hearts He reigned. His whole position relative to them implied Godhead, and not only that, but *Godhead in special kinship to mankind.* And thus the whole doctrine of John i. 1–18 and Colossians i. is implicitly contained in the historical facts about Christ and in the subjective facts of Christian experience. Jewish theology may have supplied, as is urged, in its doctrines of the Logos and the "heavenly Man," suggestions or even moulds for the apostolic teaching. Christians will find in this only an additional proof that our Lord appeared

in the fulness of the time, when not only the spiritual, political, and material, but even the intellectual preparation for Him was complete. Yet while the moulds were there, they were appropriated and transformed, not artificially or to meet external necessities, but under the overwhelming pressure of the spiritual influence of Christ. The saving power which He exercised over the apostolic writers they attributed to an organic relationship in which He stood to them. This they traced back to His pre-incarnate nature, and accounted for as resting upon His unique relationship to God as His Son, His Word, the effulgence of His glory.

But though the belief in the relationship of our Lord to mankind, based upon His eternal nature, grew up naturally and necessarily, we are told that it is unthinkable and impossible. Lotze says: "It is impossible to speak of God's honour as receiving '*satisfaction*' through the sacrificial death of a single person for the injury done it by the sin of man. For such a view, aside from its somewhat crude conception of God, is based upon the altogether impossible conception of a solidaric unity of the human race, and of the possibility of a transfer of its guilt and obligation to a single representative."[1] Only a passing word need be said as to Lotze's travesty of the doctrine of the Atonement, as supposing the bare and literal transfer of our guilt and obligation to our Lord. In the sense in which he understands this, it is manifestly impossible But the Atonement in which we believe is a very different transaction. It is the offering to God of the ideally perfect sacrifice, by Him who is naturally and eternally the representative of mankind; and the discharge of spiritual

[1] *Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion* (Eng. trans.), p. 151.

obligations therein made, just because it is representative, is reproduced in every member of the race, in so far as he enters into and shares the true life of his Head.

Now there is certainly no difficulty as to such a practical solidarity, first between the various members of the race, and then between the race and our Lord, its Head, as is essential to such a representative sacrifice. Whatever may be involved on the spiritual or physical side in the unity of the race, it is clear that there is such a practical solidarity, that the priest, the prophet, the ruler are able to utter words and perform actions which so awaken and give expression to the profoundest convictions, aspirations, and purposes of vast bodies of men, that the utterance or act of such representatives becomes the corporate utterance or act of the community. This practical unity, and consequent power of representation, is far more influential in religion than in the case of any other human interest, and is most potent in Christianity. Its indispensable condition is a common nature, and a resultant sympathy between the representative and all those whom he represents. In the most real way our Lord fills the place of supreme representative of the race in its dealings with God. His profound influence over individual men, marked by every kind of peculiarity, like to one another indeed in little else than in common homage to Him, is only equalled by the wonderful unifying influence exerted by Him over the Christian community, which finds itself one body in Him. He creates a unity which no sectarian animosities, no differences of race, social status, political party, or economic interest, can obscure. Common faith in, and

devotion to, our Lord Jesus Christ are mightier by far to create permanent and growing union than all divisive influences to cause temporary separation. What is this but to say that our Lord's spiritual headship, and the solidarity of the race in Him, are living realities in the spiritual world?

But does not this practical headship over mankind depend upon, and demand for its explanation, a strictly organic bond of union, ultimately constituted by our Lord's Divinity, and revealing the fact that the immanence of the eternal Son of God is necessary both to the unity and to the existence of mankind? Nay, apart from such an original and universal relation of the Son of God to human nature, is His special Incarnation really thinkable? That the divine and the human have such affinity, that the human can be assumed by and can express the divine, and, further, that the law of truly human life is not mere externality to, but union with and dwelling in, the divine, these truths are certainly essential to the Incarnation. The latter is so equally with the former; for, were it otherwise, the assumption of human nature by God would violate its integrity instead of perfecting it. But do not the two great doctrinal statements—the Logos doctrine of St. John and the doctrine of the original headship of Christ, as taught in Colossians i.—cast light both ways, at once supplying the necessary basis for the Incarnation, and also making the spiritual nature of man and the unity of mankind more intelligible? It is not possible to attempt an exhaustive treatment of these questions here. This would require an investigation of the whole doctrine of the Incarnation. Such a treatment, however, is not needful

for our present purpose. But a brief outline must be given of the point of view from which, in the judgment of the present writer, the subject should be regarded, and of the measure of verification which is afforded to the doctrine of Holy Scripture.

As the foundation, it must be laid down that the fact of our Lord's headship of the human race—that headship being grounded in His divine Sonship, which is the constitutive and unifying principle in human nature—has been made known by revelation. The knowledge of it has been given to men from above, and not reached by speculation. But by this is not meant that the knowledge has been given in an oracular or theoretic manner, to an independent receptive or theoretic faculty of man. The method of revelation has not been to supply to the minds of men ready-made and abstract dogmas as to divine realities, any more than as to human. Such dogmas, if they were unattached to the living testimony of facts and to conscious experience, would indeed be in a precarious position. The science of man is derived from the facts of human nature, manifested in self-consciousness and in the play of its powers in and upon the world. The whole science of man is implicated in those facts, and it is the business of inquiry to discern and to set forth what is contained in them. So all the revealed truths about Christ are contained in the facts of His consciousness and self-manifestation in the world, taken in conjunction with the effects which He produces upon the spirits of men. Belief in His Divinity is not the result of an abstract proposition communicated from heaven, but of the combined testimony of His own consciousness, of the facts of His history, of the

spiritual functions He exercises, and of His spiritual manifestation in the hearts of His people. In taking the place of God in the hearts of men, He rightfully shows Himself that He is God. Ritschl made no mistake in attaching primary importance to what he called "judgments of value"; his error lay in denying that such judgments give the material for "world-knowledge." Had he adopted a more thoroughgoing spiritual philosophy, he would have recognised that they supply not only material, but the only material, for the highest world-knowledge, and he would have followed St. Paul and St. John in attributing all the predicates of Divinity to our Lord, because of the combination of His own consciousness of Divinity, authenticated by the facts of His history, with the divinity of His position in relation to the spiritual consciousness of His followers.

But, in the next place, although we are unable by the nature of the case to get behind the highest truths of revelation, yet there is a further authentication of them, beyond and because of the fact that they are involved in external facts of history, and in internal facts of spiritual experience. In the first place, they form the basis for, and are essential to, the complete maintenance of fulness of spiritual life. The life authenticates the truth of that which maintains it. By spiritual life is meant not comfortable assurance or exalted emotion, though these are not altogether to be disregarded as confirmatory evidence of the truth of that which ministers to them, but the ennobling of character and the increase of moral power. And this means of authentication is clearly present in the case before us of the belief in the divine, original, and

continuous relationship of Christ to men. A spiritual phenomenon of unapproachable grandeur and importance stands out before us,—the relationship between Christ and those who believe in Him, a relationship which has its supreme expression in the gospels and the epistles. The testimony of Christ, the creator of the Christian consciousness, and that of the apostles who received it, are in perfect unison as to the organic relation of Christ to men and its divine ground. He assumed the headship of mankind; and in assuming it He asserted His abiding consciousness that He embodies, gives law to, and saves human nature, and that because of the mediating relationship in which He stands to both God and man as the Son. Hence the evangelic invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest: take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me," which is based upon the declaration, "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 27–30). On the other hand, faith gives to those who receive Him an insight which corresponds to, and therefore accepts the testimony of, His consciousness. The theology of St. Paul and St. John, on their side of the relationship, is as vital to their sense of what they have received from Christ, as the revelation made by Christ as to Himself is vital, on His side of the relationship, to His sense of what He is as their Lord and Saviour. And the faith of the ages has so fully substantiated this twofold testimony, that we may confidently say, that if the Fourth Gospel and the Epistle to the Colossians had not been already

written, the Christian consciousness would have endeavoured to create them, as supplying the necessary key to its highest experiences and intuitions. This fact of consciousness refuses to be dismissed as the artificial product of mere metaphysical speculation, and is much more closely bound up with immediately practical interests than any mere external communication of divine revelation could be. It is woven into the very texture of the spiritual life, and its dogmatic statement is but the unfolding of the living content of all characteristically Christian experience. Such a revelation *lives*, and the tenacity of its life is one of the strongest proofs of its veracity for all who believe that the intuitions of human nature, and especially those which it receives in its most exalted moments and in its holiest representatives, are the intimations given by the Spirit of God as our guide into all the truth.

But there is a second means by which the truths of revelation are authenticated. They fit in with, and throw light upon, the general facts of the world to which they are related. Is this further means of authentication present in the case of the original and continuous headship of Christ—understood as being based upon His divine Sonship, and as being the spiritual ground of the organic unity and the solidarity of mankind? Does it fit in with and explain other human facts? Is it in harmony with them? Does it supply a sufficient reason for them? The inquiry divides itself into two parts. First, is the doctrine of the headship of Christ, so understood, in agreement with what we know of the constitution of humanity? Secondly, how far is its presentation of the relationship of the Creator and the created in accordance with what

we otherwise know of God, and of His relation to the world and man?

I. As to the former, we are growingly obliged to recognise that humanity is an organic whole, that the community is an entity as well as the individual. With the ancient world, as we know, the community overshadowed the individual. Jerusalem, the holy city, for the Jew, the city for the Greek, the state for the Roman, was the supreme object of joy and devotion; and in serving the community to which he belonged, each, almost unconsciously, realised himself. Christianity awakened the spirit of individualism; but after a time so little justice was done to it, that in the Middle Ages the Church, as an earthly city of God, largely filled the place of the ancient city. The full meaning of individuality, whether towards God or towards the community, had not yet been realised. With the rise of Protestantism, individualism gained its rights, and gradually became the determining force, not only in religion, but in all departments of life, even in politics, which did not feel its influence till after every other commanding interest of human nature had done so. Indeed, the emphasis on the individual in recent times became, on all sides, so excessive, as to provoke a reaction, which has been assisted by the more recent developments of thought, whether theological, metaphysical, or scientific. In fact, for the moment, there is some danger of the individualist side being too lightly regarded.

But the new stress laid upon the community, as an organic whole, marks the advent of the final stage of human consciousness. The community is establishing

its claim to be the supreme and predominating entity. The individual is possible only in and through the community; and, in serving the community, he both receives and manifests his own proper life. Moreover, beneath the individual differences which distinguish men, lies a common nature, bearing an ever-accumulating wealth of inherited tendencies and aptitudes, which unites them. And that common nature, with its rights, interests, and duties, ever counts for more and more. But there is no possibility of the gains which have come through individualism being permanently lost, or of the lessons which it has taught as to the constitution of humanity being obscured. The community of the future will not be the community of ancient times, in which the importance, the worth, the possibilities, and the independence of the individual had never been realised. The community of the future will be the expression, in the highest and most universal way, of the true individuality of its members. It will triumph through, and not over, the individual. The test of the healthy progress of the community is, that it tends to produce, to develop, and to protect true individuality. And the mark of the truest individuality is, that it enters into fellowship with and serves the community.

But, further, the rich unfolding of individual spiritual consciousness which has marked Christian, and particularly modern times, cannot be ignored in the explanation of human nature. The awakening of the individual, whether in the days of the Roman empire or in the Protestant era, has been a religious awakening. Man has become conscious of himself in becoming conscious of God,

has made good his independence in the world because he recognised his dependence upon God and his responsibility to Him. That recognition has touched every spiritual faculty with a quickening power, and has led to the greatest general advance of humanity which the world has ever seen. But that which inspires, transforms, and uplifts human nature, and promotes general progress, is, according to the measure that it does this, confirmed as true for those who believe in the inseparable union of truth and life. And just as the individual stands out as the great and abiding gain of human progress, so the spiritual consciousness of direct relationship to God, by which the individual was awakened and perfected, remains as the true key to the meaning of the individuality which it has awakened. The consciousness of a direct relationship to God—this made the individual. In the light of it he must be explained. And the explanation must be carried forward to explain the community—its nature, and its ground of unity—of which the individual forms a part. Therefore, if humanity is to be understood, it must be by means of that consciousness of direct and immediate relationship to God, to which those men who have most completely realised the spiritual and moral possibilities of human nature have attained through Christ, with all its attendant wealth of spiritual aspiration, experience, and satisfaction. The Fatherhood of God, the consequent brotherhood of man, these are the relationships, apprehended by individual faith, through which the community must be understood, and by the influence of which its relations to the individual will at last be adjusted, so that the perfecting of each, which is only possible in and

through the other, may be attained. To sum up. The community is a real entity; it can only be explained through the individual; the individual can only be explained through his spiritual nature; and, finally, the spiritual nature of the individual can only be explained by means of its immediate relationship to God.

It is, then, through the spiritual consciousness of the individual that our "common humanity" must be understood. And the spiritual consciousness, in its typical representatives, is that of a direct and immediate relationship to God, which can only be expressed by three words — dependence, obligation, fellowship. Mankind is an organism of individuals, bound to one another by the manifold bonds of a highly articulated life; yet each is dependent upon God, each is accountable to Him, each has his true being in union with Him.

But let us examine somewhat more closely this spiritual consciousness. It appears to point at once to the transcendence and to the immanence of God, and, further to a certain distinctness between God as transcendent and God as immanent. Take, for example, the way in which good is inwardly presented. It is revealed to us as the ideal towards which our aspiration is to make its way. This ideal, as apprehended, fixes the standard of our duty. It is our business to realise it, and to do so by acting in conformity to it in all the relationships of life, making every act of choice between possible alternatives with due regard to it. The good we are constituted to pursue is the law we ought to obey. And it speaks to us in a twofold way. It is an external and divine authority, and at the same time it represents the dictates of our own

true nature. The authority with which the law of the good speaks to us points to its being superior and external to ourselves. The voice which utters the command, "Thou shalt," is not our own; especially is this proved to be the case by the fact that we have not fulfilled it, and that it condemns our shortcoming and transgression. Yet the law of the good is not foreign to us. In seeking the good, in doing the right, in obeying the law, we are finding and fulfilling our own real life. The law which the divine authority enforces turns out to be the universal as against the particular, the ideal as against the actual, the normal as against that which disturbs it; in short, the truly natural as against that which violates it. Thus both the ideal and the divine law which enjoins it are, strictly speaking, immanent, part of our very being. This is the profound teaching of the Book of Proverbs, that in finding the wisdom of God men find life. The law over us and the life within us are one.

What is this but to come back to the same point which we have already reached by another way[1]—that the law of righteousness witnesses to the Fatherhood of God, and to the filial nature of man? The filial represents the truly universal and the deepest in man. But it stands as at once a real presence, an unfulfilled promise, and a strong safeguard in actual individuals. The truly filial is an ideal before us, an authority over us, a power within us. It is, further, a limitation within us also of the self-destructive power of self-will. Though sinned against, it is not destroyed. What shall we say then, to this union of transcendence with immanence, of

[1] See chapter v.

authority with freedom, of imposition with aspiration, of abiding affirmation in spite of sinful contradiction, in the good which we pursue, the truth which we perceive, the moral law which we obey? Does not our constitution, imperfect and sinful as we are, in the eternal and all-perfect Son of God, who is the foundation and the ideal of our being, throw a flood of light upon the whole matter? When Hegel proclaims the identity of human nature with the divine, do we not feel that he is reaching out at a great truth? And yet in the way in which he presents it, does he not cause our reason, as well as our reverence, to revolt? Do we not feel that somewhere there must be a means of harmonizing our sense both of distinctness from God and identity with Him? And is not the means to be found in the doctrine of St. John i. 1–18 and of Colossians i. 16? We cannot fathom the relationship between the eternal Son of God and the human race; but at least it explains how our nature is ideally filial, although the ideal is not realised, and how the ideal looks two ways, and speaks with two voices—looks downward from God and speaks with authority, looks upward to God and utters the truest human aspiration.

We understand, further, how the Godhead is equally transcendent and immanent, His transcendence being especially represented by the Father, His immanence by the Son. Finally, this original constitution of mankind in the Son of God enables us in a very real sense to predicate divinity of man, avoiding withal confusion between God and man, and also to predicate humanity of God. The Son represents the ideally filial in God, derived from and dependent upon, yet one in nature and fellowship with the

Father, and is therefore the ideally human in God, and the archetype of man. The doctrine of Scripture explains the facts of human nature. Christ is the ideally human in God, the divine in man;[1] and human nature constituted in Him at once receives the law of its being from without, and recognises it as its own.

II. But if the constitution of humanity is explained by the organic headship of the Son of God, how does the latter stand with what we otherwise know of the Godhead, and of the relations in which God stands to man and to the world? The following postulates are demanded by the New Testament doctrine:

1. The Trinitarian doctrine of the Godhead and the Divinity of our Lord.

2. That there is an essential affinity between the nature of God and that of man.

3. That the relation of God to man is not merely external, but is also internal and vital.

4. That creation is not a casual or arbitrary product, so to speak, of God, but a manifestation of Him; and that therefore He who consummates humanity, and is revealed in humanity in the fulness of time, is the beginning, the author, of humanity, and continuously its spiritual ground and constitutive principle.

5. And, lastly, that the author, constitutive principle, and consummator of humanity is also the author and the end of the whole universe of which man is a part.

It is clear that the stress of any difficulty rests upon the first of these postulates. If the truth of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation be granted, the

[1] See Principal Edwards, D.D., *The God-Man*, lect. i.

rest not only naturally follows, but is in accordance with a truly spiritual philosophy, indeed satisfies such a philosophy. After what has been said of the constitution of humanity, little need be added as to the second and third postulate and the first part of the fourth. They have always been, not only accepted, but contended for by all thoughtful theists. Even when the relation of the Creator to the creature was conceived almost exclusively as that of an artificer to his handiwork, it was clearly understood that the mind of the divine Artificer was expressed in creation; and although it was difficult under the influence of that image to avoid placing the universe in an external and almost accidental relation to God, yet the vast difference between the divine Artificer, who creates the material which He fashions, and the human artificer, who works upon given material, and is limited by its qualities, was not overlooked. Theology has, however, received the signal service from the conception of evolution (which has derived its strength from tendencies of the higher philosophy, even more than from scientific discovery), that it has learned to conceive the relation of God to the world as more immanent, vital, and spiritual than heretofore. Indeed, the emphasis on this side of the truth may, for a time, become excessive, especially in the case of those who do not accept the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, with its safeguards equally of the transcendence and the immanence of God. Yet it is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of the newer light for a rationale, whether of the creation and preservation of the universe or of the revelation of God in it and to it. In particular, revelation is the expression, the utterance of God, in, through, and to the universe; and

this involves immanent control of the universe which is to utter His secrets, involves also its qualitative fitness to manifest Him, and the presence in it of spirits akin to His to apprehend the revelation.

The edifice so far reared is completed by the remainder of the fourth and by the fifth postulate; namely, that the consummator of humanity is its author and ground, and that the author and consummator of humanity is the author and end of the universe, of which man is a part. "All things have been created unto Christ,"—that is, with reference to Him, and to be consummated in Him. What is involved in this statement? The crowning spiritual end prepares the beginning. The beginning was planned with reference to the consummating end, has in it a principle of growth towards the end, and is fully manifested in the end. The intermediate stages between the beginning and its consummation in the end are a progressive unfolding of that which is implicit or potential at the beginning: they prepare the way for the end. And there is this living connexion between the beginning and the end, between the outlines of creation and the Christ who completes it, because He, the eternal Son of God, stands in vital connexion with the whole process, gradually revealing Himself in it, and becoming fully and finally manifest in the end. Such is the divine teaching of the Epistle to the Colossians, and spiritual philosophy is in consonance with it.

Doubtless, natural science protests against any attempt thus to interpret the universe, or even the nature and history of mankind, in the light of a spiritual end, prepared for from the beginning; objects also to treat

that spiritual end as from the first in charge of a divine Person, and secured by His manifestation. And this objection to theological and teleological explanations is valid from the scientific point of view, and having regard to the task which natural science has to accomplish. The business of science is to decipher the book of nature and man, character by character; and this work is hindered, becomes slipshod, and is damaged by narrow and hasty assumptions, if teleological considerations be prematurely imported into it. But it is otherwise with that higher and larger interpretation of the universe with which philosophy has to do; and science makes its great mistake when it elevates the conditions under which its own problem can alone be solved into a law universal for all thought. To the end it will remain true, that man can only interpret the world outside him by means of, and in terms of, the world within him.

The refusal to explain the history of the universe, and especially of man, in the light of the great spiritual ends which become growingly manifest to careful and comprehensive observation by no means enables us to escape the much-dreaded charge of anthropomorphism. All the experience which science investigates and analyses is relative to those who experience it, and can only be known in relation to their faculties. Nor is this all. The categories and concepts by means of which nature is co-ordinated and explained are projected into the external world from the internal. Force is conceived simply as a somewhat which exercises pressure outside us or upon us, after the analogy of the pressure which we exercise through our muscles upon the material world around us.

The nexus of cause and effect, as distinguished from invariable succession, can only be conceived, as has often been shown, by the analogy of our own volitions and their results.[1] If, then, we interpret the universe in terms of force and natural causes, but reject the aid of teleology, we arbitrarily select that which is subordinate in us as a partial key to the universe, and pronounce all outside us that is above and beyond such categories to be unknown and unknowable; while we arbitrarily exclude that which is supreme within us from taking its share in the interpretation of the world, refusing to permit it to light up, as it would do, those higher realms which natural science must for ever leave dark. In short, to use the Kantian terminology, we accept the guidance of the categories of the understanding, pronouncing that which they yield to us genuine knowledge, while we reject the ideas of the reason, as merely subjective and having no valid application to the universe outside us.

But can we justify this exclusion of reason, with its confidence that the universe is serving ends, and that those ends can be at least partially and in general discerned? The Christian believer will say, No; and he will base his answer upon reasons which natural science can neither make good nor overthrow. He will make two affirmations, which are acts of faith in the same sense that walking is an act of faith,—a dependence upon the substantial reality of the external world, upon the veracity of the reports as to it brought by the senses, and upon the power of the will to move the feet. The first affirmation is that the spiritual life is the one object of

[1] See Martineau, *Study of Religion*, bk. ii., chap. i.

supreme worth in the universe, and that all else can rank but as means to its ends. The second affirmation is that the human faculties are veracious, are given to us for the apprehension of truth, and not as will-o'-the-wisps, carrying us ever farther from reality the more we heed them. Neither of these affirmations can be demonstrated in the ordinary sense of the word. They represent an initial act of faith, like the confidence which we give to the deliverance of any other human faculty, more difficult because the consequences are more momentous, and because ordinary life can be carried on without any such faith, which is not the case where there is practical scepticism as to the testimony of perception. This faith cannot be positively demonstrated. It is originally given, and not invented. All that can be done is, first, to point out how gratuitous are the assumptions that the universe serves the lower and not the higher, and that the intuitions of the spiritual faculties are illusory; and, secondly, to examine in detail such evidence — whether metaphysical, psychological, or biological—as may be produced in support of the assertion that what seems to us gratuitous is actually the fact, in order to show that its testimony has been misreported or misunderstood.[1]

But it is when men suspend the exercise of their highest powers and thereby risk their atrophy, when physical nature looms so large upon them that they consign themselves to relative insignificance, or when the momentous importance of the spiritual conclusion palsies the courage to draw it, that this affirmation of

[1] On this whole subject Professor Seth's *Lectures on Scottish Philosophy* may be usefully consulted. See also Lotze, *Microcosmus*, concluding book.

the supreme value of spiritual life, and this faith in the objective value of spiritual deliverances seem difficult and even impossible. When such a mood sets in, the only remedy is the divine call, "Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee." Awake the spiritual into activity, and it carries in itself the affirmation of its veracity, as do the perceptions. Let men who have, so to speak, stepped down from the region of the spiritual and moral consciousness, in order to immerse themselves in the categories of the understanding, with a view to the deciphering of nature, step back again into that higher realm which is characteristically and royally human, and with the restoration of its supremacy will come the healthy and child-like faith in its veracity. There is no other remedy, and it is the first step that costs.

Directly this first step is taken, Christ stands out as the supreme fact of the human history which crowns the world, revealing and realising the end towards which the whole creation moves. And because He does this, Christ is the supreme interpretation of the history which He crowns. That all things were made "for Christ" then appears as self-evident truth; that all things were made "by Christ," while not self-evident, at least when revealed carries its own conviction with it. Granted the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and it will appear most consonant with the Incarnation that He who consummates humanity, by raising it to its full stature, by interpenetrating it with the glory of God, and by making it for ever one with Him, should have been from the first in a special sense its author, presiding over each stage of the advance by which it was prepared to receive the final and completed gift of Himself. And not

only the author of mankind, but of the universe. Philosophy joins its testimony to that of theology, that spirit makes nature as we know it. Even human perception is a *quasi* creative act, for the ordered and related object which we perceive is constituted by the human faculties which perceive it, as the philosophy of perception has recognised. Those who have allowed its full force to this fact of the constitutive function of the human mind in the perception of the external world have inferred from it the more strictly creative function of the divine mind in its origination.[1] And it will not appear strange to the Trinitarian believer, on rational grounds, that the nature which serves man, and is unknown apart from the human faculties which perceive, and in perceiving, order it, should owe its creation in a special sense to the divine Son of God, who represents, as has been said, the human in God. But to treat this subject fully would require a separate volume, and this bare indication of the point of view must suffice.

We may sum up by saying that Colossians i. 16 or John i. 1–18 affords to the believer a satisfactory philosophy both of nature and of history, and the authentication of revelation, begun by the witness of spiritual experience, is herein for him completed. Nor has this special and organic relation of the Son of God—the second Person in the Holy Trinity—to nature and man, any difficulty for the mind which does not at least equally affect the relationship of the Creator to the creature, even when understood in a Unitarian sense. All therefore hinges upon the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which must of course be taken for

[1] See, for example, the philosophical writings of Bishop Berkeley and of Mr. T. H. Green.

granted in our inquiry. This much, however, must be said, that there is a growing disposition on the part of those who reject the doctrine to treat it as free from those absurdities which ignorant controversialists have alleged against it,[1] and that, in the judgment of those who accept it thoughtfully, it is growingly held to be the best justification of our faith in the personality, the reason, the love —in short, in the whole spiritual life of God.[2]

Christ therefore, we conclude, is the natural and eternal representative of mankind, by reason proximately of His perfect humanity, but ultimately of that divine Sonship, in virtue of which He is the Creator, the indwelling Life, and the Consummator of all things, and is in especial the Head of the Church.

And thus the original relationship of the Son of God to humanity made the Incarnation possible, and caused that when He became incarnate His doing and suffering on our behalf became the strictly representative acts which, according to chapter v., we have seen that they were, and that they were required to be, in order to make satisfaction for the sins of men and to effect their redemption. His relationship to the human race, and His consequent Incarnation, enabled Him, and Him alone, to *give complete expression*, under our penal conditions, to the submission of mankind to God, to make reparation to His law, and to put away sin from man. An atoner other than human, other than perfect, other than originally and universally related

[1] This disposition has, for example, been frequently evinced by Dr. Martineau.

[2] See, *e.g.*, Principal Caird, *The Philosophy of Religion*; Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*; Illingworth, *Divine and Human Personality*.

to the race, could not have effected this,—the indispensable condition of Atonement.

The conclusions reached in this chapter are of the greatest importance for determining what was the bearing of our Lord's Divinity upon the Atonement. But as some fresh conditions must be introduced, it will be better to deal with the subject in a separate chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RELATION OF OUR LORD'S DIVINITY TO THE EFFICACY OF THE ATONEMENT

THE unspeakable importance of our Lord's Divinity to the work of human salvation, regarded as a whole, is apparent. The revelation of God to men is only completed in Him who says, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9), "I and the Father are one" (John x. 30). Deny the Divinity of our Lord, and the satisfaction to the deepest needs of men afforded by these words, or rather by the reality which they set forth, is destroyed. God has not then entered into the sphere of humanity. He stands over against man with an unbridged gulf between, and men are left to dispute how far the divine nature can be uttered to and by the spirit of man. Again, if the Incarnation be denied, the love of God to men loses its most glorious manifestation. The difference between the Christian thought of God and all other, even Jewish, has been created by, and depends on, the wonderful announcement, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (John iii. 16)—a declaration which loses all significance if the Divinity of our Lord be denied. And the appeal to the human heart made by the unspeakable condescension, the grace, the sufferings of our Lord, fails directly we cease to say, "God so loved us." Then the

mighty attraction which brings sinful men in penitence and self-surrendering faith to the feet of Christ loses its power. The love of a merely human Christ, beautiful as it would remain, loses the constraining influence which belongs only to the divine; the glowing ardour which cries, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins," dies away. Then, too, the trustful submission to the conditions of our earthly lot is made harder to maintain. We have neither the confidence that He "that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all," will "with Him freely give us all things" (Rom. viii. 32), nor the contentment meanwhile belonging to Christians, well described in the following words: "They worship One who is no remote contriver of a universe to whose ills He is indifferent. If they suffer, did He not on their account suffer also? If suffering falls not always on the most guilty, was He not most innocent? Shall they cry aloud that the world is ill-designed for their convenience, when He for their sakes subjected Himself to its conditions?"[1]

Once more, the goal of human history, the complete union of God with man, is removed. All these are elements belonging to the work of Atonement in its fullest acceptation, and to all our Lord's Divinity is essential. But our inquiry is more limited: what, we have to ask, is the importance of our Lord's Divinity to the Atonement, as an offering made to God for the remission of sins? Various answers have been given to this question.

The view of Athanasius is, that it was seemly for the Father to work out our salvation by the Logos, through

[1] A. J. Balfour, *The Foundations of Belief*, p. 354.

whom He had made us; that, indeed, only the Logos could recreate humanity; that it was necessary for the Logos to become incarnate, so that by means of His body He might die for us, and yet, by the power of His immortality, He might remain incorruptible, and might expel corruption from the world by the power of His resurrection.[1] Here a prominent consideration is the re-creative power of the Logos. But another consideration is put forward by Athanasius. Death is due from the race. But it lay in the power of the Logos, and in His alone, to take flesh, and by the death of His body to effect the release of men, "on the ground that all had died in Him."[2] Here Athanasius sets forth such a representative relation of the Logos to mankind, that His death can be treated as the death in Him of all. It is this representative relationship which constitutes the value of our Lord's Divinity to His satisfaction for the race; while it is the creative energy of His abiding divine life which is the practical agent, the efficient cause of our redemption.

According to Anselm, the Divinity of our Lord is necessary, in order that He may pay to God, as a satisfaction for our sins, "something greater than all which is outside God."[3] This necessity is due partly to the heinousness of sin, and partly to the fact that all which is outside God is already due to God, and cannot therefore be paid to Him in satisfaction of a debt. Here Anselm's analogy, drawn from the mediæval idea of satisfaction, drives him to an almost precisely opposite conclusion to that of Athanasius. The incarnate Logos dies, according

[1] See Appendix, p. 450 [2] See Appendix, p. 449.
[3] See Appendix, p. 453.

to Athanasius, that all may be treated as having died in Him. The Redeemer dies, according to Anselm, in order to present to God just that which no man can present to Him; something therefore which, while offered on their behalf, and by One who has taken upon Himself human nature in order fitly to make satisfaction for men, cannot be treated as a representative sacrifice, in the sense of Athanasius. And hence any such mystical doctrine of the relation of the Redeemer to the human race as is taught by Athanasius is wanting in Anselm.

Modern doctrines have introduced new elements, some of which wear a repulsive look in the present day. Calvinistic theologians, who have seen in the Atonement the payment to God of the exact equivalent of the unending sufferings remitted to the elect, have treated our Lord's Divinity as making Him capable of enduring that infinite suffering during the hours of the Passion. For example, Dr. Thomas Owen lays down: "Now from all this, thus much (to clear up the nature of the satisfaction made by Christ) appeareth; namely, it was a full, valuable compensation made to the justice of God for all the sins of all those for whom He made satisfaction, by undergoing that same punishment which, by reason of the obligation that was upon them, they themselves were bound to undergo. When I say the same, I mean essentially the same in weight and pressure, though not in all accidents of duration and the like, for it was impossible that He should be detained by death." But without dwelling on the absence of any Scripture warrant for such teaching, or on the unsatisfactory character of any view of the Atonement which depends entirely on the sufferings endured, to the exclusion of the moral elements

present in the endurance, and which measures the extent of the Atonement by the intensity of the suffering involved in it, or the intensity of the suffering by the extent of the Atonement,[1] the whole seems to rest upon an erroneous conception of the relations of the divine and human natures in the Person of Christ. To treat the divine nature of our Lord as giving the capacity of infinite suffering to the human, or if this be not intended, to attribute the capacity of such suffering to the divine-human Person of our Lord, as a consequence of the Incarnation, seems to be a misuse of what is known as the *communicatio idiomatum.* Our Lord was capable, as to His human nature, of vastly greater suffering than sinful and imperfect men can know. But it seems incorrect to speak of the divine nature as by its presence operating to increase the sufferings of our Lord's human nature. Those sufferings were due to the perfection of that nature in itself, although its perfection was brought about by the Incarnation, and maintained by the pervasion of the human nature by the divine. And, on the other hand, while the Son of God could and did undergo humiliation, it is more than doubtful whether His humiliation added to His divine sorrow on account of sin. Rather the humiliation was the result of that sorrow, and may be said to have lessened it, as bringing the remedy for the sin which cast its shadow on the heart of God.[2]

[1] See chapter iv.

[2] Mr. Ottley quotes with approval the following passage from Canon Liddon's *University Sermon on the Divine Victim*: "Our nature is His own: He carried it with Him through life and death; He made it bear and do that which was utterly beyond its own native strength; His eternal Person gave infinite merit to its acts and its sufferings" (*Doctrine of the Incarnation*, vol. ii., p. 315). To speak of the "native strength" of our Lord's human nature is to set up an abstraction, and a misleading one. The effect of the

The safer and more common statement is that our Lord's divine nature gave its value to the Atonement. The Divinity is said to have given its value, the humanity its appropriateness, to the atoning act. And this statement is undoubtedly true, and affords a sound basis for the consideration of the matter. But too often theological writers have been content with this general assertion without deeper investigation, or have understood it too exclusively in the general sense which Anselm attaches to it; namely, that our Lord's Divinity enabled Him to offer something greater than "all which is outside God." In this acceptation of it the statement is without the warrant, apparently, of Holy Scripture, and offends against any spiritual interpretation of the Atonement. There are two great texts of Scripture which deal with the subject. The first is Hebrews ix. 14, "Through an eternal spirit He offered Himself without blemish unto God." By this the spotlessness of our Lord's offering, and perhaps also its spontaneity and completeness, are attributed to the spirit of His Divinity. The second is 1 Peter i. 19, where we are told that we have been redeemed "with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ"; so that here again the spotlessness of the

Incarnation was to create and to maintain a perfect humanity, which, in virtue of its perfection, was capable of bearing and doing exactly what it did bear and do. So far as our Lord's personal experience was concerned, the presence of the divine nature did not carry the human nature beyond its strength, but gave to it its proper strength. The energy of the divine nature was undoubtedly the source of the miraculous power which our Lord exercised for the ends of His ministry. But that His manhood in its interior experiences should be made capable of the infinite suffering which Dr. John Owen ascribes to it would be to destroy the manhood, by annulling all those limitations of its capacities to which our Lord subjected Himself.

Redeemer seems to be the main thought present to the apostle in speaking of the preciousness of His blood. Careful consideration will surely satisfy us that the value of the great atoning act can only be said to be due to the divine nature of Him who performed it, on the ground that His divine nature affected in some way the quality of the act itself. Could that act have been precisely the same, apart from our Lord's divine nature, it would seem impossible that the presence of that nature could have made any difference to its acceptability and efficacy.

Of course illustrations which seem to prove the contrary may be brought from human affairs, and confidently applied to the Godhead. Cases of complacency, arising out of natural affection, may be cited; as, for example, where the conduct of a father has been altered by the action of his child, although a similar deed performed by a stranger would have been powerless to affect him. There are also cases of subservience; as, for example, where an act of condescension or a request by one of distinguished station wins favours or persuades to the exercise of clemency, which would otherwise have been refused. Such instances are frequently treated as analogous to the Atonement, and used to illustrate it in hymns and popular theology. But when we examine the matter more closely, we shall at once see that such seeming analogies are seriously misleading.

To begin with, we altogether misunderstand the relations of the Holy Trinity, if we conceive of the Atonement as the exertion of influence by the Son upon the Father from without, instead of as the act of the Holy

Trinity, of which the Father is the source and the Son the agent. To suppose that the Father was *induced* by the Son to become merciful to mankind violates the great declaration that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." If it be contended, that in applying such illustrations from human advocacy to the mysterious relations of the Godhead we are making natural use of helps which, while imperfect, are the best available for understanding the ways of God, the answer is that such illustrations are in direct opposition to that which is fundamental in the Atonement, and indeed in all the works of God—the perfect co-operation of the Three Persons of the Godhead, the Father being the source of all such action, even as He is the fount of Godhead.

But, in the second place, such instances in human life as have been referred to are explained by respect of persons, either on the ground of natural affection or of deference to social position, not by regard to righteousness; and such respect of persons, even in the case of the divine Son, cannot be ascribed to God. To attribute it to Him is not merely to slight His eternal pursuit of righteousness, but to injure men's thought of His love. The love of the Father, which should be the ground of our confidence and the object of our adoration and thanksgiving, is placed at a greater distance from us, and is made less real and direct than that of the Son. Not only our salvation, but the love of the Father, is represented as mediated through the Son, and in such wise that the impression is produced, perhaps contrary to the real intention of those who produce it, that the fatherly regard of God is towards the Son, and only imperfectly towards mankind. Doubtless, as has

been already contended,[1] mankind is so constituted in the Son of God that the love of God is eternally for mankind as *in* the Son. Indeed, this original relation has a most important bearing, as we shall shortly see, upon the relation of our Lord's Divinity to the Atonement. But the love of the Father towards mankind, as in the Son, is not brought about by the Atonement, but has its part in originating the Atonement, and must not be interpreted as though an antecedent indifference to, or wrath against, the race in itself were turned into love for it in Christ, by reason of the complacency of the Father in the Son; for eternally the race is known to God only as constituted in and by Christ, and therefore redeemed also by Him. The love of God towards sinful men and His wrath co-exist, as we have already seen (chap. v.)—His love being for them, as having their true life in Christ, His wrath for their false life in isolation from Christ; but a true view of redemption, and of the relations of the Father and the Son to one another and to man in the Atonement, must be determined by God's constitution of humanity, rather than by men's violation of that constitution.

We must seek, then, the value of our Lord's Divinity to the Atonement in something which lies deeper than the complacency of the Father to the person of the Son, as commonly expounded. There are cases, even in human affairs, where the influence of personality is prevalent on ethical grounds. Where this is so, it is because the personality which influences the result has first of all introduced into the action or advocacy that has procured it qualities different from those it would have possessed had it been that

[1] See chapter vii.

of any ordinary person. And this is true of the Atonement. Apart from the divine nature of our Lord, the atoning sacrifice would have been altogether impossible; and not only did the Incarnation of the Son of God make that sacrifice generally possible, but also conveyed to it when offered certain qualities which could in no other way have belonged to it. Dr. Dale's treatment of the subject brings this out more clearly than that of any other English writer, though it is somewhat marred by the untenable doctrine of the relation of God to the eternal law of righteousness which has been criticised in chapter iv. Let us endeavour to pursue the inquiry under the two heads: first, of the necessity of our Lord's Divinity to the general possibility of the Atonement; and, second, of the special qualities communicated to it, when offered, by the fact that the offerer was divine.

I. In considering the general necessity of our Lord's divine nature to the Atonement, our starting-point must be His eternal headship of the human race, as its original and representative. We have seen that it is constituted in Him, and hence its life in God is due to His presence. Mankind owes its departure from God to itself, but all approach to Him to the Son of God. Thus it belongs to the Son to lead the great return to God, just as He is the great Revelation which induces that return. His own words—"I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me"—seem to point to a relationship and an office anterior to, and independent of, the fact of sin, the ground, however, of His atoning and redemptive ministry when sin has entered in. That the Son should undertake the work of salvation followed

naturally from the relationship in which He stood to mankind through creation, and it was as impossible that atonement and redemption should take place without Him as author, as that creation should have come about without His activity.

This aspect of the matter has not had justice done to it until recently. Theologians have dwelt upon the reasons which made it most fit that the Son should be the divine Person to become incarnate, and to accomplish the work of redemption;[1] but, for the most part, they have confined their consideration to the relations of the Son to the Father and to the Holy Spirit in the Godhead as occasioning the Incarnation, and have not taken into account His eternal relationship to humanity. An important exception to this statement is to be found in Athanasius, as has been shown by the quotation given above.[2] Undoubtedly the relationships of the Son in the Holy Trinity do account for the fact that it was the Son who became incarnate. But it is necessary to go farther back than the origin of redemption. The relationships of the Son in the Godhead are the ground of His creative and constitutive relationship to mankind. The relationship of the Son to the Father not only fixes the relationship of mankind to God, but lays upon the Son the office of

[1] These are thus stated by Dr. Fairbairn: "What was impossible to the Godhead as a whole may well be possible to the second Person, for the Father could not be identified with man as the Son could. He was the ideal of the actual world; it existed in Him before it was; He was, as dependent and reflexive and receptive, the symbol of the created within the uncreated; as the object of eternal love and subject of eternal thought, He was the basis of objectivity within the Godhead."—*Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 476.

[2] See pp. 381, 382.

realising that filial relationship to God for and in mankind. But this relationship of mankind to the Son, and His office in regard to it, grounded as they are in the relationship of the Son to the Father, are original, were fore-ordained apart from sin, and were actualised in creation. The office of the Son in atonement and redemption is *consequential* to His office in creation, to the eternal Headship out of which that creative office arose. To the Son it belongs eternally to be the constitutive Head of the human race; to Him therefore, as naturally follows, it belongs to be the Redeemer of the race from sin, and its eternal representative before God. The act therefore by which atoning satisfaction is made on behalf of and by the human race on account of sin must be performed by the Son as its Head.

But, further, the realisation of the idea of humanity in Christ, and His perfect obedience rendered to the Father, were made possible only by the Incarnation. Even supposing that such a fulfilment and sacrifice as we have seen in chapter v. were presented in the Atonement would have made satisfaction for sin, though offered by a mere man, yet, in fact, they could not have been so offered. The obedience of the cross was possible only through the antecedent fulfilment of the possibilities of humanity in Christ. And it seems doubtful whether, even apart from sin, such a fulfilment could have taken place without the Incarnation. The statement of Colossians i. 16, that all things were made "with reference to," or "with a view to" Christ, clearly points in this direction, for no mention whatever is made by the apostle of the contingency of the fall. Certainly the teaching in that passage seems to be that creation was incomplete until consummated in Christ, and

it need hardly be added that St. Paul's theology knows no other Christ than the incarnate Son of God. It is no answer to the apparent meaning of this passage that elsewhere our Lord's entrance into the world is represented as redemptive; for in the actual condition of mankind prominence would naturally be given to the work of redemption, especially as the fulfilment of the promise of creation has been, in the actual circumstances of mankind, taken up into or subsumed under the work of redemption, as an integral part—nay, the positive content of it.[1]

But, if this conclusion be disputed, at least after the entrance of sin, it was impossible that human nature should be perfected, and therefore that the perfect sacrifice should be presented, except by the Son of God. It was His spiritual presence with fallen men which saved the race from falling into utter ruin through sin. As it did not lie with sinful men to save themselves, so it did not lie with them entirely to destroy themselves, since the Son of God was the abiding root of their life, both before and after the fall. And if His presence alone prevented the downfall of mankind from becoming complete, His Incarnation was necessary to the restoration and consummation of humanity. Only by the special activity of the Logos, the Son of God, assuming human nature by a miraculous intervention, could the entail of sin and guilt be broken off, and the perfect man be made manifest. His perfection is created through the assumption of human nature by the Son of God; it is maintained, owing to the pervasion of the human nature by the divine. The Son of man is in every part of His being, in every moment of His existence, and

[1] See chapter v.

in every experience, active and passive, of His spirit, subject to, pervaded by, and therefore the manifestation of the divine Son of God, whose is the personality of Christ. Hence not only because no representation of humanity could be complete without its eternal Head, but also because the perfection necessary to the Atonement could only be realised in the God-man, the value of the Atonement may be said to be derived from the divine nature of the sacrifice.

II. But once more, our Lord's Divinity conferred upon His sacrifice certain qualities of the greatest importance, which could not otherwise have belonged to it, even had it been generally possible that it should have been offered by a merely human representative of the human race.

1. In the first place, it enabled God, in forgiving sin, to put His own character in the clearest light. The incarnate and crucified Son of God gave, through all the experiences, active and passive, of His redemptive ministry, but especially through His death, the full revelation of the mind of God towards sin, His abhorrence of it, the sorrow which it causes to Him, the seriousness of His abiding displeasure against it. The holy hatred of sin, manifested by Christ in His Passion, is God's, and the satisfaction which He demands, provides, and accepts, meets the first condition of true satisfaction—that it should place in clear light and should vindicate the mind of Him to whom it is offered. All true thinking and feeling, in whatever realm of life, is the entrance into the mind of God, as He has revealed it. In and by our Lord Jesus Christ is perfectly revealed the mind of God as to sin. In His Passion it is ever set before us, that we may enter into it. That

unspeakable agony, that splendour of holy devotion, which make the crucifixion at once the most awful and the most glorious event of human history, utter, for the guidance, warning, and inspiration of men, for the reinforcement of their conscience and the awakening of their hearts, the intensity of the divine opposition to sin. The study of the Passion is for evermore the remedy for light and easy thoughts of sin. Had it been merely a human experience, shallow and self-complacent men might have argued that it was over-strung. But it is the Passion and sacrifice of the God-man, and therefore the broken heart of Jesus utters the most solemn truth, reveals the basal fact of the universe—God's passion for righteousness, His judgment of sin.

2. But if the Divinity of the atoning sufferer proclaims God's undying hatred of sin, no less does it display His inflexible regard for the law, His unfailing demand for its fulfilment. The cross "has magnified the law and made it honourable," and the more so because the great fulfilment has been accomplished by One who is God. We have seen (chap. iv.) how this feature in the Atonement is represented by Dr. Dale as the homage paid by God to the eternal and independent law of righteousness, which is alive in God. On philosophical grounds, we have been compelled to pronounce the form in which this is stated to be untenable. But while this is so, the substance of the account is true and of profound importance. The law is no abstraction, however decked with the attributes of eternity and independence, but the expression of the character and mind of God, and therefore of His will. Because it is the expression of God's life, it is the standard

of man's life, and the condition of his well-being. And, as such, God honours it, and takes care that even the exercise of His mercy shall emphasise the inviolability of the law, and the necessity that it shall be fulfilled. The cross makes clear how inexorable is that demand, and the more so because it is made upon the Son of God, who comes to the succour of mankind. That the demand is made by God, that it is met by God, secures that, in the very act of forgiving sin the claim of perfect obedience shall be reiterated with infinitely greater force.

3. At the same time, while the fulfilment of the law by God Himself declares how inviolable it is, the very fact that God Himself has fulfilled it shows that that demand is not a harsh and rigorous exaction. God does not hold Himself apart, laying down the conditions of reconciliation, and waiting till they are realised independently of Him. Such an attitude would be in contradiction of His fatherliness. The severity of His aloofness would make the assertion of the sanctity of the law forbidding, and would check in man the play of all filial affection co-operating to secure the spiritual ends of God. It would freeze rather than melt the heart. And if a human representative of man could be found to satisfy a demand so made, the result would be to give mankind a sense of independence, of self-righteousness, and self-sufficiency—in spite of sin—which would strike at the root of the filial spirit and its fellowship with God. Happily the nature of God, His relationship to men, His dealings with them in creation and throughout their history, make such an attitude on His part and on theirs impossible. And the Atonement shows us a picture which is the exact reverse. God, who

makes the demand, satisfies it; men, of whom it is made, render it in and by the Son of God. The very insistence on the authority and claims of the law which necessitates the Atonement is made to give a new and overwhelming proof of the fatherly love of God, even in His sternest dealings with mankind; and His condescension in providing the satisfaction which His law demands, awakens a filial response in the hearts of those for whom the sacrifice is offered, which insures the attainment of those spiritual ends in man for the sake of which the sacrifice is exacted.

4. But again, the fact that the Son of God, in accomplishing our redemption, came, as we have seen, under the penal consequences of sin, is the most solemn revelation of the immutability of those consequences. Even the Son of God, when He undertakes the work of redemption, is exposed to them. As Dr. Fairbairn well says: "If man's relation to sin is to be changed, if the guilty is to be forgiven, it must be on terms that leave him in no doubt as to the nature and desert of his sin."[1] Conscience, stimulated by the presence of death and all that death means, is constantly bearing this witness to men. "Strangely yet justly enough," says the same writer, "it is less easy to forget an unjudged than a judged sin. We are forced ever to remember what we have never confessed or been called to account for. We live in fear lest the slumbering justice we have hitherto eluded should awake and exact tenfold penalties for the silence added to our sin." Is this solemn warning of conscience a delusion? or is it veriest truth? The infinite mercy of God, in the moment of its grandest display upon the cross, yet confirms the

[1] *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 482.

truth of conscience, and does so the more powerfully because of the Divinity of the Sufferer. He who is the eternal Son of God, by becoming our Saviour, is exposed to the exceeding bitter necessity of "tasting death." How certainly, then, shall the awful justice which conscience fears deal out retribution upon sin! The work of redemption confirms to us the certainty and awfulness of the consequences of sin, since the Son of God must needs enter into them Himself.

5. Once more, the Divinity of the atoning Sufferer brings home the intrinsic heinousness of sin. The words of the hymn—

> I, I alone, have done the deed!
> 'Tis I Thy sacred flesh have torn;
> My sins have caused Thee, Lord, to bleed,
> Pointed the nail, and fixed the thorn,

are not overstrained. They are the natural language of all who stand in the presence of the crucified Redeemer, marking His love, and knowing the story of His divine compassion, while recognising in the sufferings He endured the handiwork of those common sins and that common sinfulness in which all men have part. A final element of value is thus given to the sacrifice by the Divinity of our Lord, in that while marking God's hatred of sin, setting forth His demand for righteousness, and confirming the solemn warnings of our conscience, it makes us one with God's mind in all this, by bringing home to us the hideousness of sin, and the splendour of the love which suffers from it, and overcomes it.

CHAPTER IX

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE ATONEMENT IN RELATION TO THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF INDIVIDUALS

Our treatment of the principle of the Atonement would be incomplete without the consideration of its bearing upon the spiritual life of believers.

In passing to this subject, it is necessary to limit ourselves at the outset. Space will not permit us to enter into many of the questions arising from the relation of the work of Christ to the experience of salvation which invite discussion and have led to controversy. What are the conditions of justification; whether it is complete at once, or is progressive, as taught by the Roman Catholic Church; the relations between justification, regeneration, and sanctification; those between faith and love, and the respective office of each in bringing about salvation; the work of the Holy Spirit in the whole, and the means by which He operates: all these open out before us, but are beyond the scope of our inquiry, although here and there a definite view as to some, if not all, of them must incidentally be taken for granted. The important matter for us is the relation of those who are brought into a state of salvation to the spiritual principle manifested in the Atonement. The teaching of the New Testament everywhere draws attention to this subject.

The two graces generally insisted upon, as marks of the Christian life, are faith and love. But each of these implies a *relation* to the object or objects believed in and loved. Their importance is not as being abstract qualities, or as being graces confined within the bounds of individual life, but the exact opposite. They carry their possessor outside himself, to fix the centre of his life in the object on which they rest. This being so, the emphasis laid upon them in Scripture shows clearly that salvation consists primarily in the relations in which Christians stand to the divine object of faith and love set forth in the gospel, and only secondarily in the personal qualities, spiritual and moral, which result from and are in conformity with these relations. This statement is not intended to disparage those qualities, but simply to point out that character is perfected by entering into and fulfilling the true relationships, and that, as sin arose from the breach of those relationships, salvation is found in their restoration.

1. In the first place, then, it is to be observed that the object of saving faith is our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the unchanging testimony both of our Lord and of His apostles. St. Paul's direction to the Philippian gaoler, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved,"[1] is in harmony with the whole tenor of the New Testament; St. Peter's declaration to the company in the house of Cornelius was: "To Him bear all the prophets witness, that through His name every one that believeth *on Him* shall receive remission of sins."[2] St. John varies the form but not the substance of this, by speaking once and again of

[1] Acts xvi. 31. [2] Acts x. 43.

believing "on His name."[1] St. Paul speaks of the man who is justified as being of "faith *in Jesus*,"[2] and of his own life in the flesh as lived "in faith, the faith which is in *the Son of God*."[3] These are only samples, but they fairly represent the general use of the New Testament. They show that the object of Christian faith is our Lord Himself, and not dogmatic statements about Him, or particular deeds done by Him, or particular sufferings borne by Him. All these, so far as they are concerned in our salvation, carry us back to Him, as the doer or the sufferer, or, in the case of the articles of the Creed, as the Person of whom they are affirmed.

But much is included in the meaning of the proposition, that Christ is the object of faith. To use St. Paul's phrase, it is not Christ as "known after the flesh";[4] that is, Christ as a particular historic individual. Both the name and the person are to be understood as carrying us back to God and forward to mankind. Only if this be borne well in mind can the watchword, "Jesus only," which is popular with many Christian people, be used without serious danger of misapprehension. "God was in Christ," and Christ has no meaning for faith except as the revelation of God. So, also, He is revealed as Redeemer, in the glory of a divine office for mankind. All that He is, all that He does, all that He suffers, is in the fulfilment of that divine office, with its threefold but inter-connected aspects—the prophetic, the priestly, and the kingly. In the majesty and grace of His mediatorial person and work, He is the Head and Lord of mankind. It is as such that He is the object of faith. All His

[1] John i. 12; 1 John v. 13. [2] Rom. iii. [3] Gal. ii. [4] 2 Cor. v. 16.

relations to God and man, and all His work, as following upon those relations, are embraced in Himself—a truth which is conveyed to us in the saying as to faith, "in His NAME."

2. Secondly, the relation in which Christians stand to our Lord is that of faith. The attitude of faith is illustrated to us by a progressive description in the New Testament. In the first three gospels the phrases commonly employed are, "becoming disciples" and "following" Christ, and on one occasion our Lord bade men "take His yoke" upon them. In St. John's Gospel we constantly hear of "believing on Him." St. Paul dwells upon "faith" with unfailing insistence. And St. John in his epistles speaks of "knowing," "abiding in," "having fellowship with" Christ; each of these expressions having been prepared for by his gospel. Taken together, these phrases help us to understand what faith is, and discover to us in it a principle of growth. Faith in Christ means spiritual adhesion, a cleaving to Him, which is an entire self-committal to Him in trust and surrender. It is the movement of the whole being to rest in Him, and is a complex act, which involves, through the spirit, at once the intellect, the heart, and the will. Nay, more, though faith, hope, and love are distinct, not only practically, but characteristically, yet all are necessarily in each—faith and hope inspiring love, faith and love colouring hope, and hope and love giving the impetus to faith. But in "coming unto" Christ, faith has the priority, because it is as believed in that He is loved and obeyed. Further, the three sets of phrases found in the New Testament serve to show a growth in the faith, which is conditioned by the

growing apprehension of its object. The discipleship and following of the Synoptists are in accordance with a comparatively external relationship to our Lord, and are consistent with much ignorance both of His person and of His work. At the same time, they are the foundation of all the more intimate relations which grow out of them, and this not only in the case of the first disciples, but in that of all who come after. The "believing in" Christ carries us much farther in the direction of spiritual apprehension and of spiritual union. But here there is the trace of special effort, the sound of contending principles. A "good fight" of faith is going on, and it is amid struggles that eternal life is laid hold of. But such expressions as "knowing," "abiding in," "having fellowship with" Christ speak of attainment, of habitual insight, of consummated union, of closest intimacy. Here the believer has penetrated into realms of blessed life which are almost beyond the reach of the enemy. To this last perfecting of faith Bunyan's description of the "country of Beulah" fitly belongs. "In this country," he says, "the sun shineth night and day; wherefore this was beyond the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and also out of the reach of Giant Despair, neither could they from this place so much as see Doubting Castle. Here they were within sight of the city they were going to; also here met them some of the inhabitants thereof; for in this land the Shining Ones commonly walked, because it was upon the borders of heaven."[1]

Thus it is brought to pass that the act of faith becomes the habit of faith, the conflict of faith becomes

[1] *Pilgrim's Progress.*

the triumph of faith, the impulse of faith is perfected in the insight of faith. And, on the other hand, Christ, who from being the authoritative master became the object of faith, is at last the world in which faith lives. Men realise the ideal of the Christian life, and are "*in* Christ Jesus."[1] Such is the end towards which baptism, at the threshold of the Christian life, looks. The importance is not in the rite, as such, but in its object, as is shown by the words of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost: "Be baptized every one of you in *the name of Jesus Christ.*"[2]

3. But, further, it is evident that the temper of spirit produced by faith depends upon the object of the faith. And our Lord Jesus Christ, as the object of faith, stands in a twofold relation to us.

(1) In the first place, He is Himself the gospel. His Incarnation is the pledge, the earnest, and the assurance of reconciliation; His death is the means by which reconciliation is accomplished, and hence His mission is to "preach good tidings of peace,"[3] to give the evangelic invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Christ is thus presented to our faith as the embodiment, the way, and the herald of salvation. And faith in Christ accepts the gospel in Him, commits the believer to Him, apprehends and surrenders to the love of God manifested in Him.

But such an acceptance and trustful surrender is the exact reversal of the revolt, the alienation, the selfishness of sin. The love of God, first distrusted, then spurned, and eventually lost sight of, is once more brought home to

[1] Rom. viii. 1. [2] Acts ii. 38. [3] Acts x. 36.

sinners in Christ; and the faith which apprehends and responds to it is the return to those relations which were violated by sin. This cannot but be so, owing to the mediatorial office of Christ. As being the way to the Father, all faith in Him is a coming to the Father. Faith can only stop short in Christ in the sense that "he that hath seen" Him "hath seen the Father." All coming to Christ is therefore a coming to God through Him.

(2) But, secondly, Christ expresses and exemplifies the true life of men, and is their representative in the presence of God. Hence faith in Him, as it has just been defined, means, of necessity, union with Him; and union with Him carries with it assimilation to Him. This is so by reason of a twofold necessity. Salvation being the return to *the Father*, in Christ, likeness to Him who is the perfect *Son* is involved in it. And again, Christ being our head and life, faith in Him means growth into Him and conformity to Him. His influence over us is due to His ideal relationship to us, and union with Him, therefore, means life in and for that ideal of our true being.

Hence salvation may be described in two ways. As concerns our relations with God it is, negatively, deliverance from wrath, and, positively, the coming to the Father, by the acceptance of His forgiveness and surrender to Him. As concerns its intrinsic nature, it consists in the likeness to Christ which is caused by union with Him. But the two are inseparable, and are brought about by the same act and attitude of faith in Christ. To believe in Him is to be brought to the Father, and therefore to be assimilated to the Son.

But we must examine in greater detail what is meant by this assimilation.

First, the entrance into the fulness of the filial spirit towards God. Hence St. Paul says: "Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God."[1] This passage shows sufficiently that the filial spirit of Christ becomes the characteristic spirit of those who are redeemed by Him, and the significant union of languages in the cry, "Abba, Father," strikingly displays the equal participation of Jew and Gentile in this highest Christian experience. But these words are, by their associations, a solemn reminder of what is embraced in the filial spirit. They were used by our Lord in the agony of the garden to express His submission to the will of His Father. "Abba, Father," He cried, "all things are possible unto Thee; remove this cup from Me: howbeit not what I will, but what Thou wilt."[2] The spirit of sons is not only that of joyful confidence, but of humble submission, which differs from the slavish spirit by its more absolute self-surrender, and also by the fact that it is founded on perfect trust and inspired by perfect love. The reception of the "spirit of adoption" carries with it, therefore, partnership in the principle of filial obedience to the Father, which was the law of our Lord's own life, and had its consummate expression in His death.

Secondly, fellowship with our Lord in His Passion is involved. Our Lord Himself declared this when He said, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself,

[1] Gal. iv. 6, 7. [2] Mark xiv. 36.

and take up his cross, and follow Me."[1] As thus expressed, an external imitation is set forth, which corresponds to the stage of teaching which we have seen to be characteristic of the synoptic gospels. But it was given to St. Paul most fully to set forth the inwardness of this fellowship. Many of his great sayings at once come to mind. To the Corinthians he speaks of "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body."[2] To the Philippians he describes the object of his ceaseless effort as being "that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead."[3] His great declaration to the Galatians is: "I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me."[4] And once more his defence to the Corinthians for the abundance of his zeal is: "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again."[5] And these are only samples of other sayings that might be quoted.

But these passages supplement one another in a remarkable way. The first two set before us conformity to our Lord's death as an inward principle of the

[1] Matt. x. 38; Mark viii. 34; Luke ix. 23, xiv. 27.
[2] 2 Cor. iv. 10.
[3] Phil. iii. 10, 11.
[4] Gal. ii. 19, 20.
[5] 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

Christian life. The third exhibits the relation of that principle to the fellowship and service of God. The last reveals the spiritual foundation upon which the others rest: "One died on behalf of all, therefore all died." The person and the death were so representative, that the death of the one was implicitly the death of all. His was a death which represented all. By His relationship to them, and by the qualities inherent in His death, it stood for their death. It was a universal act. And therefore it can be reproduced in all, and is so reproduced in those who believe in Him who died on their behalf. Their faith in Christ unites them with His death, and makes it both an end to which they aspire, and an active principle working in their lives. Such "bear about in the body the dying of Jesus," and become "conformable to His death." They have "fellowship with His sufferings." And through that fellowship their freedom from the law is brought about. His death was their objective deliverance from the law, and their crucifixion *with* Christ brings about their subjective release from it. Christ exhausted "the curse of the law" by His crucifixion, and passed into the glory of perfect fellowship with God. Believers, by their union with His death, similarly pass beyond reach of the law, and "live unto God."

The truth which emerges from all these statements is, that faith in Christ makes His death *our* sacrifice. That which Christ uttered to God in His death, we by faith utter in Him. All that the cross meant of surrender to God, of honour to the law of righteousness, of repudiation of transgression, becomes by our faith the object to

which our repentance and consecration are joined, and in which they are perfectly expressed to God. It is not that, as the beautiful but misleading eucharistic hymn puts it,

> We here present, we here spread forth to Thee
> That only offering perfect in Thine eyes,
> The one, true, pure, immortal sacrifice.

On the contrary, He alone presents the sacrifice, and presents in and with it our penitent self-surrender: but we become one with Him in His submission and self-oblation; one with Him, also, in His high-priestly acts. The result is our growing share, according to the completeness of our union with Christ, in the spirit manifest in His death, our entrance into fellowship with the spiritual principle of His Atonement. And thus it is that the cross becomes the all-powerful and the indispensable means of lifting us—as God's sons, penitent and believing—into renewed possession of the life of holiness. The relationship of faith to Christ and to His death insures the fulfilment of what we have seen to be the fatherly end sought in the satisfaction offered by Christ. That which has won our love, as revealing the mercy of God, transforms our life, as being the ideal fulfilment of the spirit which should be in us.

Thus faith in Christ, while the gift of God, is the supreme spiritual and moral act of which men are capable. Sometimes this side has been disparaged, lest the all-sufficiency of the Atonement should be put in doubt. Faith has been described as the mere hand which lays hold on Christ, and it has been forgotten that the whole man is in that outstretched hand, choosing Christ, cleaving

to Him, and eventually becoming inseparable from Him. The sacrifice of Christ is objectively complete, but its completeness consists not only in its expiatory merit, but in its attractive power. That power is displayed in the awakening of the faith which apprehends the mercy of God and surrenders to Him, which inspires a new spirit of love and service, which joins the believer in vital fellowship with his Lord. The sacrifice inspires the faith; but the faith which lives in and by the sacrifice marks the entire transformation of the man and his restoration to God.

CHAPTER X

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE ATONEMENT AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

THE course marked out for us by our investigation is almost completed. It remains to consider briefly the bearing of the revelation of the true life of man, given to us in the Atonement, upon the problems of social redemption and progress. This can only be done here in principle; to follow the subject to its practical applications would be beyond our scope.

The New Testament contains the record of a series of closely related facts. The manifestation of our Lord, His death, His resurrection, the coming of the Holy Spirit, which are the leading events of the divine history of redemption; the calling, witness, and warfare of the Church, as the firstfruits of redemption; the revelation of the kingdom of heaven, the parables which set forth the laws of its growth, and the apocalyptic vision of its triumph, in the realm of spiritual ideas;—all these form a connected whole. Throughout, the ideal and the real interpenetrate one another. The facts have ideal significance; the ideals are prophetic, and are so because they express the divinely intuitive consciousness of the Christian spirit as to what is involved in its relationships, on the one side, to God, and, on the other, to the world.

What, then, is the witness of this series of connected facts and truths as to social progress?

1. In the first place, the resurrection, following upon the cross, reveals that in the spirit manifested upon the cross is the principle of life. Whatever else may be included in the testimony of the resurrection, this certainly cannot be excluded. The cross is, as we have seen, the supreme expression and the last earthly consequence of our Lord's perfectly filial obedience. The historical event of His death cannot be separated from its spiritual meaning, for, as has been shown in chapter ii., its spiritual meaning was its actual cause. The resurrection was therefore both the fatherly response to the self-devotion of the Son, and also the forth-putting of the Son's own eternal life. As both the one and the other, it is the revelation that the filial spirit, however it may be exposed to temporary suffering and defeat at the hands of a sinful world, has in it the secret of triumphant and abiding life, is safeguarded by the love and might of the Father. We come, then, from the vision of the risen Lord, assured that in His spirit is permanence and victory.

2. But in the second place, the gift of the Holy Spirit and its outcome in the rise of the Church of Christ reveal that the victory of the spirit of Christ is not limited to His personal glorification in an unseen world, but is manifested and reproduced upon earth. All other functions of the Church are subordinate to its supreme calling to receive and to set forth the spirit of Christ. The Church is not to be understood by reference either to dogmatic or to disciplinary necessities. Its rise is due neither to the intellectual influence of our Lord nor to the artificial

efforts of external organisation, whether these are understood by a naturalistic hypothesis or are interpreted by the causes and ends which ecclesiasticism declares to have been at work. Whatever partial truth there may be in such explanations, they are inadequate, because they give priority to secondary considerations, and account for the whole phenomenon by causes which can, at the utmost, only explain a part. The Church is a spiritual, ethical, and vital creation, called into being by the Holy Spirit of Christ, and, as a consequence, having its life in receiving the mind of Christ and its mission in displaying that mind. The test of the spirit and influence of the Church, of its theology and discipline, is its faithful reflection in the relationships of human life of the principle which characterised the life of Christ and was consummated in His death.

3. With the calling of the Church there is given to it the apocalyptic ideal of the "holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God." The realisation of that ideal is the certain consequence of the triumph of our Lord, the only goal of Christian hope and effort. The coming of a city,—of a city which shall be the fitting expression and home of the spiritual forces that have created it, marking the perfecting of the life of all its citizens in and through their relationship to God and to one another,—this is the end of redemption. Perfect fellowship with God, the perfect social relationships and intercourse of a perfected society, the whole crowned by the blessedness of completed and everlasting life,—all this is comprised in the description of the heavenly Jerusalem. The conditions under which this prophecy will be com-

pletely fulfilled are not made clear. That its accomplishment can only be by the act of God is certain. But equally certain is it that, as being the ultimate purpose of God for man, it must be the object of, the hope and effort of, those who are "workers together with God." The "Jerusalem that is above" is the plan to which they must of necessity work; and whatever they find there they are irresistibly compelled by their faith to reproduce on earth, according to the power of God working in them.

4. Hence the conflict into which the witnesses of Christ are called to enter with the world, a conflict of opposing principles. Christ and antichrist, the filial and the unfilial spirit, are arrayed in deadly antagonism. As a conflict of principles, it is not altogether waged between persons; for on the one hand there is the internal spiritual strife in individuals, and on the other there is the conflict with institutions which, whatever may have been their origin, are now out of harmony with the mind of Christ. But the personal element is no more absent than it was in the days of our Lord. And the witnesses of Christ in every age advance by the way of the cross, by self-sacrifice, suffering, and apparent defeat. And this our Lord foretold.

5. But the kingdom of God is real, and men were made and redeemed for it. Since men are visited by the Holy Spirit of Christ and influenced by His witnesses, of necessity the progress of Christianity is not only by conflict, but by assimilation following upon conflict. Hence such parables as that of the mustard seed and the leaven, the latter of which expresses perfectly the conception of transformation by conflict, the conflict

being set up and the victory won by reason of an underlying affinity between the leaven and the lump. And because men live in mutual relationships, because their institutions and laws are created and sustained to serve those relationships, because, finally, even their environment is largely moulded by their spiritual life, therefore the conversion or assimilation of men which results from the witness and warfare of the Church inevitably extends to the whole range of human interests, individual and social. The natural consequence of the conversion of a man is not his removal from human relationships and environments, but the transformation of these by the Spirit of Christ working in him.

From all these considerations it follows that the renewal and perfecting of society is the task set before those whose life is rooted in Christ and inspired by the Christian hope. Of that renewal and perfecting the resurrection of our Lord is the pledge, the Holy Spirit is the power, the holy city is the pattern. It consists, however, in the prevalence of the spirit of the cross, and is brought about by the method of the cross.

Men are spiritual beings, and must be dealt with as such. All their natural relationships to one another and to the world rest upon and grow out of their relationship to God. Only by entering into that supreme relationship can they realise themselves and fulfil their relationships to one another. The reason, the obligation, and the inspiration of human brotherhood are in divine sonship. As men enter into and represent to themselves all that this sonship implies, the certain consequence will be their larger view of and their greater power for the duties of every other

relationship. If sons of God, then brothers one of another, and spiritual heirs of the world—this is the irresistible logic of the Christian life, and in it is the security for all true human progress. The entrance to this true life is by crucifixion with Christ, by the reception through His Spirit of all which His cross sets forth of trust in the Father and self-surrender to Him, of love towards men, of unflinching adherence to righteousness.

The fuller realisation of the filial spirit will have its immediate effects upon political, social, and economic interests, ordering them in growing conformity to the mind of Christ. They will have a new sacredness and importance when seen in their vital connexion with the spiritual life, as organically related to God, to mankind, and to the world. On the other hand, they will be reduced to their proper place in the hierarchy of human concerns, and protected from the self-will, ambition, greed, and materialism which degrade them. The keener apprehension of spiritual relationships may even lead some Christian men to concentrate their efforts upon political and economic reform, or upon the improvement of the general environment of the people, in order to make the conditions of their life more favourable to and in accordance with the reception of the mind of Christ. But ultimately the regeneration of individuals and the practical authority of the revelation of Christ are the essence of human progress, and all else is important as expressing or facilitating these throughout the whole range of human nature and among all races and classes of men.

Such progress can only be brought about by the method of the cross. The world will never be trans-

formed by calling forth or organising new forms of selfishness to redress the balance of the old. The greater selfishness of the greater number might be a more destructive tyranny than any which has passed away. Only by the law of service, ungrudgingly rendered in free spirit to God on behalf of men, at the cost of the self-sacrifice which is the price of love and righteousness alike, can the progress of mankind be secured. The principle of our Lord's death is both the end and the way. The light which streams from the cross reveals how essential are the conditions of the apocalyptic vision to all human progress. The earthly city will only approach the ideal in so far as "the throne of God and of the Lamb" are in it, as its citizens "see His face" with the vision of faith, and have "His name on their foreheads," the mark of filial service. The cross and the resurrection reveal that the paradox of St. John is the condition of social redemption. "His servants shall do Him service, . . . and they shall reign for ever and ever."

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT IN CHURCH HISTORY

THE object of this historical sketch is to supplement the foregoing Lecture by bringing together material which may enable theological students to follow the development of the doctrine of the Atonement in ecclesiastical history, and to watch the growth and gradual modifications of the leading types of explanations which have been given. They will then be enabled to realise how great has been the diversity of the views which have been held upon the subject; how little justice, for the most part, has been done to the many-sided teaching of the Holy Scriptures, and also how markedly these views depend upon the predominant conceptions of the relationship of God to men which were held by those who produced them.

Our account must be as brief as is possible, with due regard to being intelligible, and to doing justice to what is distinctive in the teaching of each representative of the various tendencies of thought. It will be best to divide the subject into the two divisions of pre-Reformation and post-Reformation writers—partly for the sake of convenience; partly because by the time of the Reformation a widespread general agreement had been attained, so that the area of controversy was narrowed; partly, again, because since then the prevalence of new political and juristic conceptions, applied to the relationship of God to men, has introduced new features into the treatment of the subject; and, lastly, because, at the time of the Reformation the subject came to be handled by ecclesiastical assemblies,

so that whereas before it the history must give an account chiefly of the doctrines of individual theologians, it is concerned afterwards with those of Churches and parties reflected in their authoritative articles of belief.

In dealing with the previous period, it will be both clearer and more instructive not to follow a purely chronological order, but to take the leading theories in the order of their development, and then to pursue the various phases of each type. The subject will thus fall under the following four heads:

I. The teachings of the apostolic and early Fathers, which represent the most indeterminate teaching, although they contain many of the germs of later dogmatic systems.

II. The doctrine of redemption from the devil, with the various modifications, some grotesque, some more spiritual, which the doctrine received between the times of Irenæus and Bernard.

III. The doctrines which attribute a Godward significance to the Atonement, the most definite of them being that of Anselm, in his *Cur Deus Homo?*

IV. Moral or subjective theories, of which Abelard is the most striking representative.

In addition to these, certain subordinate questions were discussed: as, for example, whether the Passion of our Lord was *necessary* in order to salvation, and what was the relation of the Incarnation to sin. Sufficient has been said of these in chapter v.

PART I

I. The Early Fathers

The early Fathers treat the Atonement simply as a fact, without any attempt to set forth its grounds. They describe it in the actual words of Scripture, with little or no comment upon them.

The *Apologists* use the death of Christ chiefly as the most remarkable part of the evidence of prophecy, to which they attach great weight. The correspondence of the sufferings of our Lord to the predictions of the Old Testament is dwelt upon as a striking proof of the divinity of the Christian faith. As might be expected, greater emphasis is generally laid upon the life and immortality which were brought to light by the resurrection of Christ than upon His death.

Yet indeterminate as is the teaching of most of the early Fathers upon the doctrine, it is distinctly coloured by the individuality of the various writers.

In CLEMENT OF ROME practical, ethical interests predominate. In his epistle (chap. xvi.), Christ is held up as the great example of humility, the whole of Isaiah liii., and also passages from Psalm xxii., being quoted in support of this. In chapter xxi. his readers are exhorted to "reverence the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood was given for us." Exhorting men "to cultivate love to God and to one another," he ends by saying, "in love has the Lord taken us to Himself, and, on account of the love He bore us, He gave His blood for us by the will of God, as flesh for our flesh and as soul for our soul." But there is no clear statement as to the reasons which moved the will of God. Thus it will be seen that Clement does not attempt to handle the subject dogmatically, but uses the death of Christ as the constraining motive to gratitude, reverence, and self-sacrifice.

The so called EPISTLE OF BARNABAS deals with the subject in its relation to the sacrifices of the Jewish temple. We are told in chapter ii., according to the Latin version, that Christ has abolished the sacrifices of the temple in order that "the new law of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is without the yoke of necessity, might have a human oblation." This expression, however, refers apparently, not to the sacrifice of our Lord, but to the spiritual sacrifices which

all men are called upon to offer to God. In chapter v. it is said that "the Lord endured to deliver up His flesh to corruption, that we might be sanctified through the remission of sins, which is effected by His blood of sprinkling"; and Isaiah liii. is quoted in support of this. We are further told that "the Lord endured to suffer for our soul," and that "the Son of God came in the flesh with this view, that He might bring to a head the sum of their sins who had persecuted His prophets to the death." In chapter vii. the writer says: "If therefore the Son of God, who is Lord, and who will judge the living and the dead, suffered that His stroke might give us life, let us believe that the Son of God could not have suffered except for our sakes." Throughout, the writer's thought dwells upon the Levitical sacrifices and the Old Testament predictions, treating their fulfilment as a matter of necessity, but not attempting any independent investigation into the reasons of either the one or the other. The main point is that the law and the prophets made an authoritative demand, which our Lord by His Passion fulfilled.

Two features are dwelt upon in the writings of IGNATIUS. First, the manifestation of Christ's love given to us in His cross; and, secondly, that through His death we receive the spiritual nourishment of our souls, by partaking of His body and blood. In the *Epistle to the Trallians* (chap. viii., shorter form), his readers are exhorted "to be renewed in faith, that is the flesh of the Lord, and in love, that is the blood of Jesus Christ." In the sixth chapter of the *Epistle to the Romans* (shorter form), he pleads, "Him I seek who died for us; Him I desire who rose again for our sake; . . . permit me to be an imitator of the Passion of my God"; and in the seventh chapter is the celebrated passage beginning, "My love has been crucified," and ending, "I desire the bread of God, the heavenly bread, the bread of life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became afterwards of the seed of David and Abraham;

and I desire the drink of God, namely, His blood, which is incorruptible love and eternal life." Thus the redemptive power of the Passion is the manifestation in it of a love so unspeakable as to crucify all other loves in us, and that it is the means of that infusion of the divine life of Christ into the spirits of men of which the Lord's Supper is the outward sign and pledge.

The EPISTLE TO DIOGNETUS is of importance, as expressing, in the most striking way, the appeal to our hearts made by the love of God as manifested in the death of His Son, although there are expressions which give a clearer statement of the doctrine of substitution, or the transference of our sin to Christ, and of His righteousness to us, than any which we have hitherto found. The passages are so important that they must be quoted at some length.

"Was it, then, as one might conceive, for the purpose of exercising tyranny, or of inspiring fear and terror? By no means, but under the influence of clemency and meekness. As a king sends his son, who is also a king, so sent He Him; as God He sent Him; as to men He sent Him; as a Saviour He sent Him; and as seeking to persuade, not to compel us, for violence has no place in the character of God. As calling us He sent Him, not as vengefully pursuing us; as loving us He sent Him, not as judging us" (chap. vii.).

"But when our wickedness had reached its height, and it had been clearly shown that its reward, punishment and death, was impending over us, and when the time had come which God had before appointed for manifesting His own kindness and power, how the one love of God, through exceeding regard for men, did not regard us with hatred, nor thrust us away, nor remember our iniquity against us, but showed great longsuffering, and bore with us,—He Himself took on Him the burden of our iniquities, He gave His own Son as a ransom for us, the holy One for transgressors, the blameless One for the wicked, the righteous

One for the unrighteous, the incorruptible One for the corruptible, the immortal One for them that are mortal. For what other thing was capable of covering our sins than His righteousness? By what other one was it possible that we, the wicked and ungodly, could be justified than by the only Son of God? O sweet exchange! O unsearchable operation! that the wickedness of many should be hid in a single righteous One, and that the righteousness of One should justify many transgressors! Having therefore convinced us in the former time that our nature was unable to attain to life, and having now revealed the Saviour who is able to save even those things which it was (formerly) impossible to save, by both these facts He desired to lead us to trust in His kindness, to esteem Him our nourisher, Father, teacher, counsellor, healer, our wisdom, light, honour, glory, power, and life, so that we should not be anxious concerning clothing and food" (chap. ix.).

These passages will show that this epistle might stand with equal propriety at the head of the so called moral doctrines of the Atonement, and of those which look upon it as a satisfaction for sin.

JUSTIN MARTYR was led, both by temperament and education, to apprehend Christianity as the divinely revealed, authoritative, and therefore satisfactory philosophy. He describes, in his *Dialogue against Trypho* (cap. ii.), his experience as a disciple successively of the Stoic, Peripatetic, Pythagorean, and Platonist schools, and his inability to find satisfaction in any of their systems. He then gives an account of the interview with the aged Christian which was the turning point of his life. In the course of this, the latter recommended him to study the Old Testament prophets as more trustworthy guides than the Greek philosophers, because they had been put in possession of the divine wisdom. The result of this was, he says, that "straightway a flame was kindled in my soul; and a love of the prophets, and of those men who are friends of Christ, possessed me;

and whilst revolving his words in my mind, I found this philosophy alone to be safe and profitable. Thus, and for this reason, I am a philosopher" (cap. viii.). Hence Justin lays stress upon the Christian faith rather as giving the perfect revelation than as accomplishing redemption, or perhaps it would be better to say that for him redemption is the subjective spiritual result of revelation. Thus, for example, he says that our Lord, "becoming man according to His [God's] will, *taught us* these things for the conversion and restoration of the human race" (*First Apology*, cap. xxiii.).

But while this is characteristic of Justin's teaching, he gives also an account of the redemptive purpose of the sufferings of Christ. In the third chapter of the *First Apology* he says that our Lord "endured both to be set at naught and to suffer, that by dying and rising again He might conquer death." And, in the thirteenth chapter of the *Second Apology*, "For next to God we worship and love the Word, who is from the unbegotten and ineffable God, since also He became man for our sakes, that, becoming a partaker of our sufferings, He might also bring us healing." These two passages must supply the key to the meaning of a statement in the *Dialogue against Trypho*, which, looked at superficially in the light of our ordinary doctrine of satisfaction to God by the substituted sufferings of Christ, seems hard to interpret. In the ninety-fourth and ninety-fifth chapters, arguing on the text, "Cursed be every one that hangeth on a tree," Justin contends, "Just as God commanded the sign to be made by the brazen serpent, and yet He is blameless, even so, though a curse lies in the law against persons who are crucified, yet no curse lies on the Christ of God, by whom all that have committed things worthy of a curse are saved. . . .

"For the whole human race will be found to be under a curse. For it is written in the law of Moses, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are

written in the book of the law to do them.' And no one has accurately done all, nor will you venture to deny this; but some more and some less than others have observed the ordinances enjoined. But if those who are under this law appear to be under a curse for not having observed all the requirements, how much more shall all the nations appear to be under a curse who practise idolatry, who seduce youths, and commit other crimes! If, then, the Father of all wished His Christ for the whole human family to take upon Him the curses of all, knowing that, after He had been crucified and was dead, He would raise Him up, why do you argue about Him, who submitted to suffer these things according to the Father's will, as if He were accursed, and do not rather bewail yourselves? For although His Father caused Him to suffer these things in behalf of the human family, yet you did not commit the deed as in obedience to the will of God. . . .

"For the statement in the law, 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,' confirms our hope, which depends on the crucified Christ, not because He who has been crucified is cursed by God, but because God foretold that which would be done by you all, and by those like to you, who do not know that this is He who existed before all, who is the eternal Priest of God, and King, and Christ. And you clearly see that this has come to pass."

There seems at first sight a contradiction between the denial that any "curse lies on the Christ of God, by whom all that have committed things worthy of a curse are saved," and the assertion that "the Father of all wished His Christ for the whole human family to take upon Him the curses of all, knowing that after He had been crucified and was dead, He would raise Him up." The explanation seems to lie in the change to the plural. The "curses of all" are those evils which have come on the human race because of sin. They are regarded rather as evils *of condition* than as the direct infliction of an ever-active

wrath of God. And thus Justin uses the words, "He suffered these things," as an equivalent expression. The reason why it pleased God that His Son should undergo these evils is not stated. No necessity of the divine nature is alleged. But the fact that our Lord's humiliation would be precedent to His exaltation, that through that twofold experience He would conquer death on behalf of both Himself and mankind, has been *foretold*, and therefore *the fulfilment* becomes the ground of Christian hope, it being expressly declared that it is *not* "because He who has been crucified is cursed by God." The view of Justin may therefore be summed up as emphasising the prophetic office of Christ as the spiritual cause of redemption, and treating the efficacy of the death of Christ as lying, not in a satisfaction to God, but in His identification with the sufferings of the human race on account of sin (its "curses"), in order that men may become partakers of His blessings, sharing with Him His victory over death.

The same conception of Christianity as the divine philosophy is set forth by CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, who regards our Lord, as the title of one of his principal works, *The Pedagogue*, shows, as the divine instructor of mankind, the incarnate and prophetic wisdom, addressing Himself to and evoking the hidden spirit of wisdom, which constitutes, in spite of ignorance and sin, the true nature of men. He has no doctrine of Atonement, and, indeed, treats the death of Christ simply as the supreme example of a beneficial martyrdom, conveying blessings differing only in degree, not in kind, from those of which ordinary martyrdoms are the means. In the *Miscellanies* (*Stromateis*), iv., cap. 9, the following passage occurs: "Alone, therefore, the Lord, for the purification of the men who plotted against Him, 'drank the cup,' in imitation of whom the apostles, that they might be in reality gnostics and perfect, suffered for the Churches which they founded. So then also the gnostics who tread in the footsteps of the apostles ought

to be sinless, and out of love to the Lord to love also their brother; so that, if occasion call, enduring without stumbling afflictions for the Church, 'they may drink the cup.'" Christ purified men by witnessing to the truth, and by displaying His fidelity to it by dying for it. And all His followers who are called to martyrdom, with the apostles at their head, have a like death, and bring about, according to their measure, like results.

TERTULLIAN represents quite another than the philosophic spirit. A North African, and in early life a lawyer, he combines an uncompromising ethical spirit with the fervour, prone to fanaticism, of his race. His writings contain no attempt to explain the death of Christ; but he is of importance for our doctrine, as having been the first to make use of the word "satisfaction," in his tract *On Penitence*, while, at the same time, his teaching that satisfaction can and must be rendered to God by the penitence of the sinner, is absolutely incompatible with the idea of the necessity of a satisfaction made to God on account of sin by the death of Christ. The following quotations will make good this statement: "Thus they who through repentance for sins had begun to make satisfaction to the Lord will, through another repentance of their repentance, make satisfaction to the devil" (*De Pœn.*, cap. v.). This refers, of course, to penitents who afterwards relapse into sin. "For repentance is the price at which the Lord has determined to award pardon: He proposes the redemption of release from penalty at this compensating exchange of repentance" (*De Pœn.* cap. vi.) "You have offended, but can still be reconciled. You have One whom you may satisfy," etc. (*De Pœn.* cap. vii.).

II. The Doctrine of Redemption from the Devil

The first elaborated doctrine of the purpose of the death of Christ treated it either as the conquest of the

devil, or the ransom paid to him for the life of men. Although there were never wanting theologians who opposed this explanation, it is the most influential theory from the time of Irenæus till Anselm finally broke its power, and counts among its exponents the great names of Origen, Augustine, Peter Lombard, and Bernard. Yet those who follow its development will find that both the form and the spirit of the doctrine changed considerably, as presented by different writers; sometimes disfigured by immoral and grotesque features, as in Gregory of Nyssa; sometimes held side by side with incompatible accounts, as in Origen; obscuring, in Augustine, a much profounder philosophy, which is yet not apprehended with sufficiently strong and consistent grasp to enable it to become the determinative factor of the whole; altered in various ways by Gregory the Great and John of Damascus, till it almost shaded away into the doctrine of satisfaction to God, which succeeded it; and expounded by Bernard, rather out of deference to authority than on its merits, side by side with a deeply spiritual appreciation of the merit of Christ, and with a high sacramentarian view of eucharistic participation in the body and blood of Christ. It will be seen, therefore, that some latitude of classification must be allowed in giving an account of this doctrine. Several of the writers who are here ranged under this head are so placed, not because they reproduce in full the characteristic marks of the doctrine, but because they illustrate the transition from it to other views.

If it be asked how it came to pass that what strikes modern minds as such an impossible and offensive account of redemption could thus be held by so many teachers of the greatest intellectual power and saintliness, the answer is, that it was due partly to moral causes and partly to defective exposition of Scripture, the former, however, being necessary to the possibility of the latter. Living in the darkness of pagan or mediæval times, themselves

sometimes fighting a terrible battle with tendencies of thought and morals in themselves consecrated by paganism if not derived from it, the empire of evil weighed on the spirits of these men as a dread reality, so nearly hiding the kingdom of God from sight that it seemed as though its tenure of power—which while opposed to God was permitted by Him—must have *quasi* legal rights, and must be dealt with by God as having them. While, therefore, some theologians looked upon redemption as a rescue, either by force or even by fraud, those of loftier temper looked upon it as a dealing with rights which had been acquired by the devil, on the recognised principles of the law of possession and on the ground of their being a divine judgment upon the rebellion of sin. With this sense of the awful might of evil, and with these principles of divine and human government to explain it, the Scriptures gave up to them one word which became the cornerstone of their teaching. The word "ransom" is applied once and again to the death of Christ. From whom could He ransom men? Certainly not from God. It must be therefore from the devil; and immediately they proceeded to carry out the idea with a fulness of detail derived from human affairs.

Irenæus (150–200) must be placed at the head of this division, but with an important reservation, for he holds what is essentially a moral theory. The great spiritual end of the death of Christ—according to him—is to convert us by persuasion to return from our apostasy from God. The influence of Christ's death is therefore exerted over mankind, and not over the devil; yet the reason for proceeding by this method of moral suasion is said to be, that it became God to redeem His own from the devil, not forcibly, as the devil acted in the beginning, but by moral means. The devil had violently carried off the human race from the kingdom of God to his own apostasy; but it became God to win us back from the

tyranny of the devil, justly, in conformity with His own righteousness. The passage is to be found in the fifth book, chapter i., of the work, *Against Heresies*: "And whereas the apostasy unjustly tyrannised over us; and although we belonged by nature to the omnipotent God, alienated us from Him, contrary to nature making us his own proper disciples, the Word of God, powerful in all things, and not being wanting in His own righteousness, justly also converted the apostasy against Him, redeeming those things which are His own from the devil, not with force, after the manner that the devil tyrannised over us in the beginning, seizing the things which were not his own insatiably, but *according to persuasion* in the way it became God to work, by persuasion and not by force, to accept what things He would, so that neither what is just might be transgressed, nor should the ancient creation of God utterly perish."

It has sometimes been contended, as by Baur, that the persuasion spoken of refers to the devil, who was to be induced by the death of Christ freely to release mankind; but a careful study of the passage will not sustain this interpretation. The contrast upon which Irenæus insists as necessary to the righteousness of God is between His procedure towards man and the devil's. The devil tyrannised over men by force, and so alienated them from God; but the Word of God regains them by persuasion. Even the devil could not act violently against God, but only against His property. Therefore the completeness of the contrast would be lost unless it were understood as setting forth the two opposite methods of dealing with the human spirit. Although, however, there is here no suggestion of payment to the devil, yet at the same time there is a recognition of certain rights of possession which must not be violently invaded or infringed. The human race does not belong to the devil; therefore, if it freely chooses to break away from him, it is perfectly right that God should

receive it back, but not that God should descend to the same level with the devil and seize for Himself what the devil had taken possession of.

That, however, with Irenæus the leading thought about the redemption was its bearing upon the dominion of the devil will be made clear by another quotation. In book iii., chapter xviii., he says that "Christ united man with God, for unless man had conquered the adversary of man the enemy would not have been righteously conquered"; by which is meant that man, having yielded himself to the devil, his salvation by a direct putting forth of divine power would have been unfair. Man himself must win his own liberty from the foe.

One other saying of Irenæus serves to bring our Lord's death into a more intimate and less accidental relation to the Incarnation. "Our Lord," he says, "summing up (*recapitulans*) universal man in Himself from the beginning even to the end, summed up also his death" (bk. v., chap. xxiii.). In another passage Irenæus distinguishes between the function of our Lord's soul and of His flesh in our redemption: "His soul is given for our souls, His flesh for our flesh" (bk. v., chap. i.).

In ORIGEN (185–255) the theory of satisfaction to the devil is fully developed; but it is found side by side with a doctrine of propitiation to God, and no attempt whatever is made to establish any relation between the one view and the other. The reason for this is, that although Origen was of highly speculative mind he was yet a commentator, and dealt with passages as he found them in isolated contexts, without any careful inquiry into their bearing upon one another. Thus, for example, in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (bk. iii., chap. vii.), commenting upon the word redemption, he says: "By redemption is meant that which is given to enemies for those whom they detained in captivity, that they may restore them to their original liberty. The captivity therefore was detained

among the enemies of the human race, being overcome by sin as by war; the Son of God came, who has been made for us not only wisdom of God, and righteousness, and sanctification, but also redemption." In the next chapter, however, he says that St. Paul "had something more sublime, and declares that God set Him forth a propitiation through faith in His blood, by which, indeed, *He would make God propitious to men* by the offering of His own body." This latter doctrine is also taught in an incidental reference to Isaiah liii. in Origen's *Commentary on the Gospel of John* (vol. xxviii., chap. xiv.), and in his homily on Leviticus ix.

It will be seen that here Origen departs from the guarded language of St. Paul, and speaks of Christ making God propitious to us. In this he approximates to heathen modes of thought, whereas the apostle carefully excludes any personal reference, so that the Atonement may not be supposed, as was the case with heathen sacrifices, to produce a favourable effect on the temper of God. But elsewhere Origen teaches a doctrine of satisfaction to the devil in the most explicit terms, although two slightly different forms of it are found. In his *Commentary on Romans* (bk. ii., chap. xiii.) Origen says that the devil "demanded what price he would" for our liberation; that price was "the blood of Christ." Here a straightforward transaction is described; but the following extracts represent it in a less favourable light. In his *Commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew* (vol. xiii., chap. viii.) he speaks as follows: "For bear in mind that the Father delivered Him up for us all because of His love towards us. For the opposing powers, having delivered up the Saviour into the hands of men, did not take account that He surrendered Himself on behalf of the salvation of certain, but so far as lay in them—since none of them recognised the wisdom of God hidden in a mystery—they betrayed Him to death in order that His enemy death might take Him captive, like

those who die in Adam." And in volume xvi., chapter viii., he continues: "But to whom did He give His soul a ransom for many? It certainly could not be to God; was it not therefore to the devil? for the devil held sway over us until there should be given to him the ransom on our behalf, namely, the soul of Jesus,—to him, I say, *who was deceived* into supposing that he could hold sway over it (that is, the soul of Jesus), not seeing that he has no punishment that is able to hold that soul in bondage. Therefore also death, having thought to hold sway over Him, no longer holds sway, He being free among the dead, and stronger than the power of death, and so much stronger as that all of those held fast by death who wish to follow Him are able to follow Him, death having no more power over them; for every one who is with Jesus is unhurt by death."

In both these passages it is evident that the powers of darkness consented to the transaction by mistake, and therefore surrendered a substantial dominion over the human race for a temporary and merely apparent dominion over Christ. The second passage even speaks of the evil one as having been deceived; but it does not seem necessary to regard this deception as practised by God.[1]

But if there is ambiguity in Origen as to whether God was an active agent in the deception of the devil, there is none in GREGORY OF NYSSA (*c.* 331–396). He boldly says in the *Oration to the Catechumens* (chap. xxvi.): "For the devil wrought deceit for the destruction of nature; but He who is at once righteous and good and wise used, for the salvation of that which was destroyed, the invention of deceit (*τῇ ἐπινοίᾳ τῆς ἀπάτης ἐχρήσατο*), benefiting by this means, not only that which was destroyed, but also him

[1] Origen sometimes compares the death of Christ to that of martyrs and heroes, e.g. *Contra Celsum*, bk. i., chap. i., bk. ii., chap. xvii. (here it is with Socrates), bk. ii., chaps. xl.–xlii.; sometimes he speaks of the death of Christ as giving additional weight to his doctrine, and as the means of its propagation, e.g. *Homilies on Jeremiah*, bk. x., chap. ii. But these are not of importance for our subject.

who had wrought the destruction against us." The end is here treated as justifying the means, especially as its benefit embraces not only mankind, but also the devil, for the chapter ends with a conjecture that the devil himself may ultimately be saved, a hope which Origen shares with Gregory.

No doctor of the Church has been more influential than AUGUSTINE (354–430). His writings contain a wealth of frequently incompatible materials which subsequent teachers have freely used to build up the most diverse systems. This is true of his treatment of the Atonement as of other subjects. To begin with, our Lord's dealing with the devil by His death occupies the predominant place, though an important modification is introduced. The devil, according to Augustine, neither deceives himself nor is deceived by God, but oversteps his power in dealing with our Lord to the destruction of his dominion over the human race.

On the other hand, Augustine supplies materials which, in the hands of Anselm, took an entirely different shape. He insists upon the voluntary nature of our Lord's death. It was no penalty of His own sin that He endured, but He died because "He willed, when He willed, in the way in which He willed" to do so (*De Trin.*, bk. iv., chap. xiii.). "The Lord," he says, "paid for us a death which was not due, that the death which is due might not hurt us; for neither was He stripped of His flesh by the right of any power, but He stripped Himself" (*De Trin.*, bk. iv., chap. xiii.). We shall shortly see how this conception became the corner-stone of Anselm's theory of satisfaction paid to God.

Once more, when Augustine deals with the question as to whether our Lord's death was necessary to the salvation of mankind or not, he says that without attempting to prove "that there was no other possible method for God, to whose power all things are equally subject, yet for healing

our misery there neither was nor behoved to be any other more suitable method." "For what," he adds, "was so necessary to raise our hope, and to liberate from despair of immortality the minds of mortals cast down by the condition of mortality, than that God should prove to us how highly He valued us and how much He loved us." Here Augustine's view has close affinity with the moral theories of the Atonement, especially when we bear in mind how strongly he opposes the idea that the sacrifice of the Son was a propitiation to the Father. "What is meant," he asks, "by being justified by His blood? What force is there in His blood that those who believe in Him should be justified (*ut in eo justificentur credentes*)? and what is the meaning of being 'reconciled through the death of His Son'? Does it mean that while God the Father was angry with us, He saw the death of His Son on our behalf, and was placated towards us? Can it be the fact that His Son was so far placated towards us as even to deign to die for us, but that the Father was to such a degree angry with us that, had not the Son died for us, He would not have been placated? And what is it which the same doctor of the Gentiles teaches in another place? 'What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He who spared not His own Son,' etc." And he concludes: "All things therefore together, the Father and Son, and the Spirit of both, equally and harmoniously work" (*De Trin.*, bk. xiii., chap. xi.). A magnificent statement, which popular theologians in later times would have done well to lay to heart.

Augustine's doctrine is contained in his work *De Trinitate*, and the following is its outline:

Mankind was intended to be constituted as a spiritual unity, but men have the ground of that unity in Christ and not in themselves (bk. iv., chaps. vii. and ix.). But as Christ is the mediator of life, so the devil is the mediator of death. "For as the proud devil," he says, "led man,

becoming proud, to death, so the humble Christ led back humble man to life: because as the former, being uplifted, fell and dragged down him who consented to him, so the latter, having been humiliated, rose and uplifted the believer" (chap. x.). Since man, then, consented to his own seduction, the devil possessed him as by a sound right (*tanquam jure integro possidebat*, bk. iv., chap. xiii.). When it is said, however, that man is handed over to the power of the devil, we are not to understand that God either did this or commanded it to be done, but only that He permitted it,—justly, however, for God deserting the sinner, the devil took possession of him (bk. xiii., chap. xi.). The way of our salvation is as follows: Christ, the mediator of life, showed us "that it was not death which was to be feared, which, on account of the condition of mankind, could no longer be evaded, but rather impiety, which can be guarded against by faith. He met us at the end of our journey, travelling by a very different road: for we came to death through sin, He by righteousness; and therefore, while our death was the penalty of sin, His death was made a sacrifice for sin" (bk. iv., chap. xii.). The death of Christ, not being a penalty of sin, was spontaneous on His part (*quia voluit, quando voluit, quomodo voluit*, bk. iv., chap. xiii.). No power stripped Him of His flesh, but He Himself put it off (bk. iv., chap. xiii.). The Incarnation was necessary; for unless our Lord had been man, He could not have been slain; and unless He had been God, we should not have been convinced that He could have avoided death had He pleased (bk. xiii., chap. xiv.). His death, not being due from Him, availed to set men free from their deserved death. "The unjust one dealing against us, as it were, by just right (*velut æquo jure*), He, our Lord, having been innocently slain, conquered him by a most just right (*jure æquissimo*)"—(bk. iv., chap. xiii.). The devil therefore was conquered because, while he found in Christ nothing worthy of death, yet he slew

Him all the same. Hence it was just that the debtors whom the devil held fast should be released by believing in Him whom the devil slew without any debt (bk. xiii., chap. xiv.). Thus God conquered the devil, by justice first, and not by power; and this was in keeping with the divine order, in which justice is prior to power (bk. xiii., chap. xiv.). Christ observed this divine propriety by postponing the exercise of His power (*postposuit quod potuit ut prius ageret quod oportuit*, bk. xiii., chap. xiv.).

We have already seen how Augustine deals with the question whether this way of salvation was necessary or only expedient, and how he deals with the question of a satisfaction rendered to God by the death of Christ. It will be seen that in this account of the transaction with the devil there is a commingling of the sublimer view that God was dealing with a certain just right according to the eternal principles of His righteousness, with the somewhat grotesque view that the devil overreached himself owing to his excessive pride, and lost the human race by taking unjust advantage of its Head. The sublimer elements of Augustine's exposition of the theory save him from giving countenance to the grosser conception of fraud being practised upon the devil.

But Augustine makes it clear that the devil's power, although in the circumstances just, is not absolute. This is his account of it: "God did not, indeed, desert His own creature so as not to manifest Himself to him as a God creating and making alive, and, in the midst of penal evils, even affording many good gifts to evil men. For He did not restrain His compassions in His anger (Ps. xxvii. 9), nor did He lose man from the law of His own power when He permitted him to be in the power of the devil, for neither is the devil a stranger to the power of the Omnipotent nor to His goodness. For in what way, indeed, could evil angels subsist in life, unless through Him who quickens all things?" (bk. xiii., chap. xii.)

Here both Augustine's view of the sovereignty of God and the plain facts of life, which show that man is not altogether given over to evil, come in to modify his account of the dominion of the devil, and we shall see that the modification is of profound significance. The devil could not be, but for the divine power of goodness; man also could not be, but for that power of goodness. The dominion, therefore, which the devil exercises, and under which man lives, stands in some direct relation to the divine power and goodness, although Augustine does not expressly show what that relation is. It is also the just punishment of sin. But directly God is reconciled, the dominion of the devil falls to the ground. "If," he says, "the commission of sins subjected man to the devil through the just anger of God, immediately the remission of sins through the benign reconciliation of God delivers man from the devil" (bk. xiii., chap. xii.). By this is meant that the wrath of God has laid men open to the dominion of the devil; but the moment that wrath is laid aside—and it is laid aside, according to Augustine, not on account of an atoning satisfaction, but by a movement of the divine compassion—then the dominion of the devil loses its essential ground, and the consequence is the redemptive transaction through the death of Christ, which rids man of the devil's tyranny, without disregard on God's part of the devil's acquired rights.

This whole view of the relation of the penal dominion of the devil to God, to His wrath, and to His love, shows how nearly Augustine approached to a doctrine of punishment which would have so depressed the position of the devil as to force the whole question to assume an entirely different form. As he leaves the matter, we see no reason why, if God's wrath was necessary on account of sin, and entailed the dominion of the devil, His affection towards us should suddenly change to that of mercy, followed by redemption. If the reign of love becomes God, why the

previous prevalence of wrath? If the latter be justified, how can it give place to the former? Had then the deeper elements in Augustine's account come fully to the front, they must have raised the question, not what payment should be made to the devil to compensate him for the loss of man, but what dealing with the wrath of God, which is manifested in the devil's reign, is necessary in order that that wrath may pass away.

That this question did not present itself to Augustine is due to two causes: first, because he had not thought through the relations in which the divine wrath and love stand to one another, and hence for him they are successive and contrasted states of the divine mind; and because, in the second place, the consequences of God's wrath, namely, the rule of the devil, are more prominent than the wrath itself. His treatment of the subject fails, therefore, to grasp the spiritual elements of the problem. This shortcoming is assisted by the unscriptural mistake into which he falls. The Scriptures know of two mediators, the first and the second man. Augustine substitutes for the former the devil, and thereby incidentally gives him an intimacy with man which the Scriptures hardly ascribe to him.

Finally, as with so many others, a view of our Lord's death, as a sacrifice to God, is found side by side in Augustine with the theory of dealing with the devil. Christ is said to be a sacrifice for sin (*hostia pro peccato*, bk. iv., chap. xii.). He also says that "four things are taken account of in every sacrifice—to whom it is offered, by whom it is offered, what is offered, for whom it is offered; but He, Himself the one and true Mediator, by the sacrifice of peace reconciling us to God, remained one with Him to whom He offered, made them one in Himself for whom He offered, united in Himself the offerer and the offering." All this must be brought into harmony with the remainder of Augustine's teaching, apparently

as it seems to me, by understanding the sacrifice to be the self-surrender of our Lord to the will of the Father that He should deal with the devil by submitting Himself to death.

It is not necessary to follow this doctrine minutely through all the writers of lesser importance by whom it was taught. Some of them fluctuate between the conception that our Lord's death was a transaction—even a fraudulent one—with the devil, and the opposite conception that it was a struggle with the devil, in which the latter was vanquished (*e.g.* Ambrose). Some adopt Augustine's modification that the devil lost his rights over mankind, because in his treatment of our Lord he overstepped them (*e.g.* Leo the Great, 390–461, sermones xxii., cap. 4, *per injustitiam plus petendi totius debiti summa vacuatur*). Some introduce grotesque similes to illustrate it, comparing our Lord's humanity to the bait placed upon the hook of His Divinity, so that the devil did not detect the latter, and was caught by it (*e.g.* Rufinus' *Expos.*, p. 21, etc.). The devil is Behemoth, in whose nostrils a hook is put (Gregory the Great). Peter Lombard varies the figure. The cross, according to him, is a mouse-trap, baited by our Lord's blood (*Liber Sententiarum*, iii., dist. xix. 1).

But special attention must be given to the way in which the matter is presented by Gregory the Great, Bernard of Clairvaux, Peter Lombard, and in the East by John of Damascus, because their treatment shows the various ways in which the transition was made to widely different doctrines of the Atonement.

Gregory the Great (*c.* 540–604) shows the process by which the idea of a conflict with the devil became subservient to that of a satisfaction offered to God for sin. Many passages can be found in which he teaches the ordinary doctrine as it appears in Augustine and other Latin Fathers. The following quotations from his *Magna Moralia in Librum Job*, are sufficient evidence of this:

"Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? and hast thou seen the gloomy doors? For the 'gates of death' are the adverse powers, which the Lord descended and opened, because by dying He overcame their strength, which are by another appellation called the 'gloomy doors,' because, while they are not seen, by reason of their crafty concealment, they open to deceived minds the way of death."

"For the exactor of mankind came to Him because he saw Him to be a man. But Him whom he believed to be a man despised for His weakness, he felt, by His power, to be above men" (vol. iii., p. 413).[1]

"He immediately announces the coming of the Lord's Incarnation, saying, 'In his eyes He will take him as with a hook.' Who can be ignorant that in a 'hook' a bait is shown, a point is concealed? For the bait tempts, that the point may wound. Our Lord therefore, when coming for the redemption of mankind, made, as it were, a kind of hook of Himself for the death of the devil" (vol. iii., p. 569).

"Yet before, when he perceived Him to be subject to passion, and saw that He might suffer all the mortal accidents of humanity, all that he imagined concerning His Divinity became doubtful to him from his exceeding pride. For savouring of nothing else but pride, whilst he beheld Him in humility, he doubted of His being God; and hence he has recourse to proof by temptation, saying, 'If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread'" (vol. i., p. 98).

But a new prominence is given to the human agents of Satan in the matter, so that the conflict becomes rather the earthly conflict between our Lord and them, than the unseen strife between Him and the devil.

"What fool even would believe that the Creator of all

[1] The renderings given in the text are from the translation in the "Library of Fathers" (Oxford, Parker).

things was given up into 'the hands of Satan'? Yet who that is instructed by the Truth can be ignorant that of that very Satan all they are members who are joined unto him by living frowardly? Thus Pilate showed himself a member of him, who, even to the extremity of putting Him to death, knew not the Lord when He came for our redemption. The chief priests proved themselves to be his body, who strove to drive the world's Redeemer from the world by persecuting Him even to the cross. When, then, the Lord for our salvation gave Himself up to the hands of Satan's members, what else did He but let loose that Satan's hand to rage against Himself, that, by the very act whereby He Himself outwardly fell low, He might set us free both outwardly and inwardly?" (vol. i., p. 150).

And that which is brought about by these human instruments of Satan is the appeasing of the wrath of God by Christ's bearing the chastisement of our sin.

"But we must consider how He is righteous and ordereth all things righteously, if He condemns Him that deserveth not to be punished. For our Mediator deserved not to be punished for Himself, because He never was guilty of any defilement of sin. But if He had not Himself undertaken a death not due to Him, He would never have freed us from one that was justly due to us. And so, whereas 'the Father is righteous' in punishing a righteous man, 'He ordereth all things righteously,' in that, by these means, He justifies all things, namely, that for the sake of sinners He condemns Him who is without sin; that all the elect might rise up to the height of righteousness in proportion as He, who is above all, underwent the penalties of our unrighteousness" (vol. i., p. 149).

"For the Redeemer of mankind, who was made the mediator between God and man through the flesh, because that He alone appeared righteous among men, and yet

even though without sin, was, notwithstanding, brought to the punishment of sin, did both convict man, that he might not sin, and withstand God that He might not smite; He gave examples of innocency that He took upon Him the punishment due to wickedness. Thus, by suffering, He convinced both the one and the other, in that He both rebuked the sin of man by infusing righteousness, and moderated the wrath of the Judge by undergoing death; and He 'laid His hand upon both,' in that He at once gave examples to men which they might imitate, and exhibited in Himself those works to God by which He might be reconciled to men" (vol. i., p. 541).

And thus we find the old language about the devil with an altered application to the chastisements of sin. We are told, "He then came without sin, who should submit Himself voluntarily to torment, that the chastisement due to our wickedness might justly loose the parties thereto obnoxious, *in that they had unjustly kept Him who was free from them*" (vol. i., p. 149).

Of course we must not look for the consistency of a dogmatic treatise in a commentary like this; but the passages quoted are not accidental, and they show the growing influence of the Godward explanation of the Atonement.

The teaching of BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX (1091–1153) is found in his *Tractatus ad Innocentium II., Pontificem, contra quædam Capitula Errorum Abælardi*, which stands as No. 190 of his Epistles. The writer deals with what he regarded as the errors of Abelard concerning the doctrines of the Trinity and redemption; but strong as his opposition to these detailed heresies is, it is subordinate to his antagonism to the rationalistic spirit, of which Abelard was the leading representative. The latter had shown a general disregard of the authority of the doctors of the Church, and had, in particular, poured contempt upon the theory of payment to the devil, and indeed upon any doctrine of redemption which rested upon the vicarious suffering

of the innocent for the guilty. Bernard therefore, as the champion of authority, is forced to uphold a doctrine which could claim such powerful names in its support. He repeats the old statement of the case as follows: "The prince of this world came, and in the Saviour found nothing, and since notwithstanding he laid his hands on the innocent one, he most justly lost those whom he was holding in his possession; since He who owed nothing to death, having accepted the injury of death, rightly (*jure*) loosed him who was liable to them both from the debt of death and from the dominion of the devil" (cap. vi.). And he goes on to argue in support of the justice of the innocent dying for the guilty.

But both the growing temper of his times and his own spirituality of mind were against the old doctrine, and hence Bernard's treatment of it is faltering and incoherent, standing side by side with passages that reveal other views which, though not intellectually wrought out, evidently lie closer to the writer's heart. Thus he is anxious to remove the impression that there is any essential justice in the devil's possession of man. The justice of it must be found in God; that is, as a righteous judgment upon sin. "Hence man was justly held captive in such wise, that nevertheless the justice of it was neither in man, nor in the devil, but in God" (chap. v.). Had Bernard's doctrine been consistent with this position, he must have constructed a theory of satisfaction to God by the death of Christ. For this his spiritual insight presented some rare material, as the following quotation will show: "Not the death, but the will of Him who died of His own accord was well-pleasing; God the Father did not require the blood of the Son, but nevertheless accepted it when offered; not thirsting for blood, but for salvation, because salvation was in the blood" (cap. viii.). But his thought takes a different turn. He ends by saying: "And indeed I discern three principal elements in this work of our salvation:

the form of humility, in which God emptied Himself; the measure of love, which reached even to death and the death of the cross; the sacrament of redemption, for the sake of which He bore that death which He underwent. Of these, the first two, without the last, are like painting upon empty space. . . . I wish with all my efforts to follow the lowly Jesus; I desire Him who loved me and gave Himself for me,—to be embraced in the arms of His vicarious love; but it behoves me also to eat the Paschal Lamb," etc. (cap. ix.). The humility of Christ, His manifestation of divine love, His gift of Himself as the nourishment of eternal life, sacramentally bestowed,—these are the influences of our Lord's Passion which *live* for Bernard, and leave but a precarious foothold for the old doctrine, which, for the sake of authority, he feels bound to assert.

The treatment of the subject by PETER LOMBARD (*c.* 1160) shows how this doctrine, which in Gregory the Great joined hands with the satisfaction doctrine, might as easily pass into the moral theory. In the *Liber Sententiarum*, iii., dist. xix., which deals with the way in which our Lord has redeemed us by His death from the devil and from sin, we find the ordinary Latin presentation of the doctrine. But the bondage of Satan is sin; we are delivered from Satan by being delivered from sin; and it is the love of God, manifested in the cross, which destroys the power of sin. By being justified, he says, is meant "that we have been loosed from sin, set free from the devil, who held us in the chains of sin." "The love of God towards us is manifest in this, that He gave His own Son to death for us sinners. But such a pledge of so great love towards us having been shown forth, we also are moved and kindled to love God, who did so great things for us; and through this we are justified, that is, having been loosed from sin we are made just." "He, indeed, to this end, shed His own blood, that He might destroy our

sins. That by which therefore the devil held us was destroyed by the blood of the Redeemer; for he only held us by the chains of our sins; those were the bonds of the captives. The Redeemer came, bound the strong one by the chains of His own Passion; entered into his house, that is, into the hearts of those whom he inhabited, and delivered us his vessels which he had filled with his own bitterness." He ends by speaking of how Christ "has redeemed us from the slavery of the devil; that is, from sin (for the slavery of the devil is sin) and from punishment."

The last writer (not in chronological order) to be noticed under this head is the Greek Father, JOHN OF DAMASCUS (*c.* 750). He does not altogether belong to it, for in words he repudiates the notion that our Lord's blood was offered to the devil. But he may be fitly placed here as a transition to the second type of theories, partly because he shows the change which may be brought about by the simple substitution of death for the devil as the foe encountered by our Lord, and partly because he still holds the old language, derived from Irenæus, as to the unseemliness of delivering mankind from the devil by force. The following passages will exhibit his position, as it is set forth in his *De Fide Orthodoxa*:

"Since the enemy entices man by the hope of divinity, he is enticed by the setting forth of the flesh, and manifests at once the goodness and the wisdom, the justice and the power of God: His goodness, because He did not make light of the weakness of His own creation, but was moved with compassion towards it when it had fallen, and stretched forth His hand; His justice, which when man was worsted, adopts another course to conquer the tyrant, neither snatches man from death by force, but in His goodness and righteousness has made him again a victor, whom death has long ago enslaved on account of sins, and has saved like by like, which was difficult; finally, His

wisdom, because He discovered the most seemly solution of the difficulty" (iii. 1).

"For God forbid that the blood of the Lord should be offered to the tyrant. Therefore death advances, and having swallowed the bait of His body is pierced by the hook of His Divinity, and by tasting His sinless and quickening body is destroyed, and vomits them forth whom it had formerly swallowed. For as darkness disappears on the approach of light, so corruption is driven away by the attack of life, and life comes to all, but corruption to the corrupter" (iii. 27). "For He became man in order that He might conquer the conquered. For He who is manifested was not unable even by His omnipotent authority and power to deliver man from the tyrant; but occasion of complaint would have been given to the tyrant, had he after conquering man been overpowered by God" (iii. 18).

We have seen sufficiently how this first account of the meaning of our Lord's death gradually lost ground, both from external pressure and from modifying internal influences. It was never alone in the field, although at one time predominant, and when the season was ripe, Anselm's epoch-making treatise, *Cur Deus Homo?* consigned it to the limbo of impossible theological curiosities.

We pass now to the second great class of pre-Reformation doctrines, those which explain the death of Christ as satisfying a demand made by God.

III. Doctrines of the Death of Christ as Satisfying the Demand of God

In giving a summary of the leading theories which fall under this head, it is necessary to recall what we have already seen; namely, that the conception of a satisfaction made to divine justice is found in general terms in several of the early Fathers, that some of those who gave chief prominence to the relation of our Lord's death to the devil

held side by side with it a doctrine of the Atonement, properly so called, unreconciled with it, and that more than one sought to bring the whole transaction into some kind of direct relation to the justice of God.

ATHANASIUS (*c.* 297–373) is the first great writer of whom notice must be taken under this head. The following is an abstract of his account, as presented in his treatise *De Incarnatione Verbi*:

It was seemly that the Father should work out our salvation by Him through whom He had made us (cap. i.). Men originally partook of the Logos, and hence became "logical," λογικοί (cap. iii.). But by sin they fell into the nothingness (τὸ μὴ εἶναι) from which they had been saved by the presence of the Logos (cap. iv.). Yet it would have been unworthy of the goodness of God and most unseemly that the handiwork of God in men should disappear, either through His carelessness or the deceit of the devil (vi.). But the Logos alone could re-create. "Therefore the incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Logos of God passes over into our country, by no means having been far off before, for no part of the creation has been left empty of Him, but He has filled all through all, Himself dwelling with His own Father. . . . But seeing . . . that it was unseemly that before it had been fulfilled the law should be broken, . . . having yielded Himself to death instead of all men, He approached (προσῆγε) the Father, and this out of love to men, accomplishing that the law of corruption affecting men should be repealed (λυθῇ), on the ground that all had died in Him (ὡς μὲν πάντων ἀποθανόντων ἐν αὐτῷ, cap. viii.). For the Logos recognised that only by His death could men be loosed from corruption; but as it was impossible that the Logos, who is also the Son of the Father, should die, therefore He took to Himself a body, in order that, by its participation in the Logos, it might be able to die for all, and yet on account of the indwelling Logos to remain in-

corruptible; and, finally, that by the grace of the resurrection corruption might be stayed from all. Thus He paid what was owing by His death (*ἐπλήρου τὸ ὀφειλόμενον ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ*), and clothed all men with incorruption by the power which is contained in the resurrection" (cap. ix.).

The following points need to be brought out. Athanasius conceives death as a debt owing on account of sin, rather than as a penalty inflicted in consequence of it. Doubtless, at bottom, these two conceptions may be united. But the emphasis, where punishment is insisted upon, is on the direct infliction of the divine will; the figure of debt points rather to death as the natural and necessary consequence of sin, following upon it by the action of the divinely ordained constitution of things. And this involves two consequences. First, by taking the matter out of the sphere of mere will into that of reason and the constitution of things the *necessity* of our Lord's death is made clear, in contrast to the view of most ancient writers; and, secondly, our Lord's payment of the debt must be not only substitutionary, but so strictly representative, that all may be truly said to have died in Him. What is of the divine order must be fulfilled by all, and not merely by one, even though He be the Head of the race.

In the next place, the redemptive meaning of our Lord's humanity is conceived in a very limited way. The bond of union between our Lord and mankind is found almost exclusively in the eternal Logos, and not in the divine humanity. Flesh is assumed simply because for the payment of our debt the death of the Logos is necessary, and the incorporeal Logos cannot die.

Again, man is looked upon, under the influence of Greek philosophy, as partaking of the divine Logos or reason, rather than as possessing divine sonship in the eternal Son of God. In the Arian controversy the whole strength of Athanasius was given to the explication of the relations of the Father and the Son in the Holy Trinity;

yet the relationship of men to God is set forth not in terms of sonship, but of participation in the Logos. Hence the filial relation is not called in to give a clew to the meaning of the Atonement. It is death which is owing to God, and salvation is expressed in terms of the payment of death and the infusion of life (both, too, with great prominence given to the physical side, though no doubt redemption from the nothingness of death must be interpreted in a higher than a *merely* physical sense) rather than conceived as the restoration to right relations with God, in which eternal life consists. In all these respects the doctrine of Athanasius—notwithstanding its profundity—must be held to be defective.

The great work of Anselm (1033–1109), *Cur Deus Homo?* was, as already has been stated, of epoch-making importance. It destroyed the possibility of the old explanations, and it gave the most satisfactory answer open to mediæval theology to the question why the Incarnation and the cross were necessary to the salvation of mankind. The treatise takes the form of a dialogue between Anselm and a supposed disciple, Boso—a form which has this advantage among others, that it enables Anselm to deal with the difficulties involved in the current teaching rather as suggested to him than by him. The first ten chapters of book i. deal with preliminary difficulties, showing, *inter alia*, how impossible was the old answer explaining the necessity of our Lord's death by reference to the dominion of the devil, and repelling the objection to the vicarious suffering of the innocent for the guilty, by pointing out that our Lord endured death of His own free will.

The starting-point for the main discussion is with the proposition in which both agree, that forgiveness is necessary to blessedness (i. 10). The question then arises, Upon what ground does God forgive sin? And this can only be answered by determining what it is to sin, and what it is to make satisfaction for sin (i. 11). Anselm's

answer to both of these questions is as follows: Sin is "not to render to God His due." His due being in the case of a rational creature the subjection of the will to Him. As long as the sinner does not pay back that which he has taken away, he remains guilty. Nor is mere repayment sufficient; he must pay back more than he has taken away, because of the insult which he has offered to God by depriving Him of His due. Satisfaction is therefore the repayment of His honour to God (*sic ergo, debet omnis qui peccat, honorem quem rapuit Deo, solvere; et hoc est satisfactio, quam omnis peccator debet Deo facere*, i. 11). The question then arises, Could God forgive sins without any such satisfaction to His honour? And the answer is, that to take no account of sin simply means not to punish it; and since the only way of rightly ordering sin, unless satisfaction be made, is to punish it, if it is not punished, it is allowed to go unordered. But it does not become God to let anything go unordered in His kingdom (*Deum vero non decet aliquid in suo regno inordinatum dimittere*). Least of all can it be tolerated in the order of things that the creature should carry off the honour due to the Creator and not repay it. Therefore, unless God be either unjust to Himself or powerless, it is necessary that either the honour withdrawn should be paid back or that punishment should follow (i. 12, 13). Here Anselm inserts the saving clause, that so far as God Himself is concerned, that is, intrinsically, it is impossible either to honour or to dishonour Him; but so far as the creature is concerned, he honours God by the submission of the will to Him, dishonours Him by the withdrawal of that obedience (i. 15).

Satisfaction, therefore, being necessary, there are two conditions which must be fulfilled. First, the satisfaction must be according to the measure of the sin; secondly, nothing can be accepted as a satisfaction for sin which would have been due to God even had man never sinned

(i. 20). This leaves man in a helpless position, especially as whatever he may pay to God he has first received from Him (i. 20). One more condition Anselm makes, by which he seeks to find a place in his theory for the element of truth in the old prominence given to the devil. If man is to be reconciled to God, he must first honour God by vanquishing the devil. And this victory must be won in such wise that, as man easily yielded to the devil in order to sin, and thereby justly brought upon himself mortality, so in this weak and mortal condition he must vanquish the devil by incurring the difficulty of death, in order that he may by no means sin,—a victory clearly impossible for one who is conceived and born in sin. Satisfaction for sin cannot, therefore, be made by mere man.

On the other hand, "it is necessary that the goodness of God should, on account of His immutability, perfect concerning man what He has begun, although the whole of the good which He gives is by grace" (ii. 5). This can only be if some one is found who can pay to God for the sin of man "something greater than all which is outside God." Only God can do this. Yet He who makes the satisfaction must be man; otherwise man does not make the satisfaction (ii. 6). And His human nature must be of the race of Adam, so that He who makes satisfaction may be the same as the sinner or of the same race (ii. 8). "But if Adam would not have died had he not sinned, much more will not such an one in whom sin cannot be, because He is God, be under the debt of suffering death" (ii. 10). Obedience can be demanded of Him by God, but not death, for He is sinless, and death is the debt consequent on sin. Moreover, the satisfaction must be not only by means of something which is not due to God, but must be through bitterness and difficulty, and a supreme gift of devotion, in all these respects being the exact contrary of sin. And all these conditions are fulfilled in

the death of Christ (ii. 11). But He who gave so great a gift of His own accord to God should not go without a recompense. Such a recompense must consist either in giving the party recompensed something which he had not before, or in remitting what can be demanded from him. But neither of these is possible in the case of the Redeemer. Therefore the recompense which cannot be given to Him must be rendered to another, and it is both just and necessary that the recompense should be given by the Father to him to whom the Son wished it to be given. "To whom more consistently shall He assign the fruit and recompense of His own death than to them, on account of whose salvation . . . He became man, and to whom . . . by dying He gave an example of death for righteousness sake?" (ii. 19.)

Such is the main outline of the doctrine of Anselm. Sufficient has already been said (chap. iv.) as to his view of the necessity and nature of satisfaction. But when we compare the *Cur Deus Homo?* with the *De Incarnatione* of Athanasius, to which it bears some resemblance, we are struck by the wide difference in spirit between the Greek and the Latin treatment of the subject. The whole appearance of the Atonement, as described by Anselm, has become external, mechanical, and almost accidental. No such eternal relation between the Son of God and humanity is set forth by him as makes the Logos of Athanasius the natural representation of humanity; nor is there any sign of that close and mystical relationship between the incarnate Redeemer and those whom He delivers which is vital to the account of Athanasius. Anselm knows nothing of the principle of Athanasius, that the Atonement is accepted on the ground that all have died in Christ. And just as salvation comes in an accidental way to the race (for the reason that Christ can receive nothing Himself, and, being entitled to demand some reward for His sufferings, cannot ask anything with greater propriety than the

salvation of men), so the salvation itself seems to be rather a gift of external status than of spiritual condition. For all these reasons the obedience of Christ has for Anselm only private significance. Therein our Lord simply discharged His own personal obligation to God. And, finally, His death seems only accidentally the means of His satisfaction. In Athanasius, death is the natural and necessary debt into which sin has brought mankind. It must be paid by Christ, and mankind must discharge it in Him. For Anselm, death simply happens to be the only available offering, that is not due, which the Son can pay to the injured majesty of God. The relations between God and Christ and man have lost their spiritual intimacy, and have become external. Yet, with all these deficiencies of the Latin spirit, Anselm's work remains one of the greatest creations of theological thought.

The influence of Anselm is predominant in a large number of subsequent writers; *e.g.* Robert Pulleyn of Oxford, who, however, inclines to a moral doctrine of the Atonement, Hugh and Richard of St. Victor, Alexander of Hales, Albert the Great, and Bonaventura. It is not necessary in this account to deal with the minor differences which distinguish them.[1] The only point to be noted is that Bonaventura, while substantially at one with Anselm, gives up the necessity of the satisfaction which was all-important for Anselm, and thus forms a connecting link between him and Thomas Aquinas.

The doctrine of THOMAS AQUINAS (1225–1274) is chiefly to be found under four questions, xlvi.–xlix., of the third part of his great work, the *Summa Theologica*, in which he discusses the Passion of Christ, its efficient cause, the mode of its operation for our salvation, and its effects. The first subject which Aquinas considers is whether our Lord's Passion was necessary for our salvation. There are

[1] The reader may be referred to Oxenham's *Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement* for further information about them.

three general forms of necessity; namely, the internal necessity of nature (which must be that of the nature of either God or man), the external necessity of compulsion, or the necessity which arises when an end has been laid down which either cannot be attained at all, or not conveniently, without the adoption of these means. His conclusion is that "although it was not necessary that Christ should suffer by any necessity of compulsion, either on the part of God, who ordained that He should suffer, or on the part of Him who suffered voluntarily, nevertheless it was necessary and expedient that He should procure by merit (*promereretur*) for Himself and for us eternal life, making satisfaction to the Father for us, and that He should fulfil the whole Scripture in this." But this necessity is simply on the ground of the divine foreknowledge and pre-ordination (quæst. xlvi., art. ii.). It depends entirely upon the divine will whether satisfaction shall be demanded from the human race. It would not have been unjust for God to have liberated man without any satisfaction. A judge is compelled to punish crime because of his office. But God has no superior, being Himself the supreme and common good of the whole universe. Since, moreover, sin is committed against Himself, He injures no one if He remits it without satisfaction; just as man may do, and be called merciful, but not unjust (quæst. xlvi., art. ii.). Yet though not necessary, "it was more suitable that man should be liberated through the Passion of Christ, since we have attained to greater and more valuable blessings through it, than we should have done through the bare will of God" (quæst. xlvi., art. iii.). For the Passion of Christ secures other ends relating to salvation besides liberation from sin. Five such are enumerated by Aquinas: (1) it manifested the greatness of the love of God to man; (2) it gives an example of humility, of obedience, constancy, righteousness, and other virtues; (3) it merits on our behalf justifying grace and glory; (4) it

brings home to man the necessity of keeping clear from sin; (5) it was seemly that as man was conquered by the devil, so man should conquer the devil, and that as man merited death, so man should overcome death by dying. Moreover, it was suitable that as through the "one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (Rom. v. 19), so through the suffering due to obedience God should be reconciled to men (quæst. xlvii., art. ii.). The way in which the Passion of Christ operated for our salvation was fourfold; namely, by merit, procuring for us grace; by satisfaction; by sacrifice, as a most acceptable offering to God; and by redemption, as destroying the slavery of sin and guilt (quæst. xlviii., art. i.–iv.). The essential element of satisfaction is thus laid down: "He properly makes satisfaction for an offence who exhibits to the offended party that which the latter loves as much as or more than he hated the offence" (quæst. xlviii., art. ii.); and hence the conclusion is that "the Passion of Christ was not only a sufficient, but a superabundant satisfaction for the sins of the human race, on account of the Passion generally, of the dignity of the life laid down, and, lastly, on account of the greatness of the love displayed" (quæst. xlviii., art. ii.).

Finally, Aquinas lays down that "although the work of redemption can be ascribed to the whole Trinity as the first cause; yet to be the Redeemer was the property of Christ according to His human nature, who set forth His own blood and His own life for the redemption of all" (quæst. xlviii., art. v.). A view which, in doing justice to the union of the Holy Trinity in the work of salvation, fails sufficiently to account for the fact that it was the Son who became incarnate and suffered.

One or two general remarks will suffice. Aquinas presents a striking example of the difficulty of those who interpret the ways of God to men by the bare decrees of His predestinating will. Salvation, we are told, could

have been brought about by a word; but when we ask what the salvation would have been, we must infer that it would have been without that manifestation of the love of God, that perfect human example, that incentive to holiness, which result from the Incarnation and the cross. But this is not the salvation that we know anything of, nor can we even conceive it according to the existing laws of the spiritual life. Moreover, in discussing whether satisfaction is necessary, Aquinas treats God simply after the analogy of a private individual, standing in only accidental relations to an offender. It is not remarkable, therefore, that under the influence, in part, of this speculative inability to justify the demand of God for satisfaction, and in part of devotional feelings, Aquinas should declare the satisfaction offered by Christ to be superabundant.

It was upon this statement that DUNS SCOTUS (*d.* 1308) fastened, and in doing so showed the extreme results of his Nominalist philosophy. For him the phrase "superabundant satisfaction" will not bear examination. The following is the gist of his argument in book iii., dist. xix., of his *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*:

The merit of Christ must come from His human nature, and therefore cannot be infinite. If it were, first, there would be no distinction between the created will of Christ and the will of the uncreated Word; and, secondly, infinite merit would then proceed from a finite will. Here his belief that goodness is determined by the will of God comes to his assistance. Things are good because God wills them, and not *vice versâ*. So the worth of any merit depends upon the value at which it is set by the acceptance of God. It has merit because it is accepted, and just that amount of merit which God is pleased to attach to it. And thus, while intrinsically the merit of Christ cannot be other than finite, it may receive a kind of infinity, because God's acceptation (*acceptatio*) of it takes it for an infinite

value. Again, the only necessity of this work of redemption depends on God's ordination. As far as Christ is concerned, had God willed it, a good man, or an angel, or even each man for himself, might have made satisfaction; as far as mankind is concerned, the death of Christ has saving power only in respect of those for whom God accepts it—that is, the elect (lib. iii., dist. xx.).

The views of Duns Scotus on the relation of the Incarnation to sin have been stated in chapter v.

Of succeeding writers, mention must be made of WICLIF and WESSEL, who, as forerunners of the Reformation, set forth the theory of satisfaction, with particular reference to evangelical piety.

IV. MORAL THEORIES

We have seen that several of the theories treated under divisions i. and ii. might almost equally well be classed under the head of moral theories, that is, of theories which account for the redemptive efficacy of the death of Christ by its influence upon the heart and character of men. But there remain to be noticed under this division, Gregory of Nazianzen, Peter Abelard, the great rationalistic churchman of the twelfth century, and the Mystics.

GREGORY NAZIANZEN (329–389) gives his view in his forty-fifth oration. He cannot restrain his indignation at the supposition that our Lord's death was a ransom paid to the devil. He cries, "Away with the insult! that the robber should be compensated, and with such a price!" But holding the current interpretation of the New Testament term "ransom," and giving it the prominence in the matter which was then usual, he is in an equal difficulty in supposing that the ransom is paid to the Father. "But if," he says, "it is paid to the Father, in the first

place, how can that be? For we were not held under His power. But, secondly, what is this account, that the Father delights in the blood of the only begotten, seeing He did not even receive Isaac when he was on the point of being offered up by his father, but made an exchange in the sacrifice, giving a ram in place of the rational victim? Or surely it is evident that the Father receives the sacrifice without either having demanded it, or being in need of it, but on account of the economy and of the need that man should be sanctified by the human estate of God (*τὸ χρῆναι ἁγιασθῆναι τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν ἄνθρωπον*); in order that He Himself might deliver us, having overcome the tyrant by power, and might bring us to Himself through the mediation of the Son, and His arrangement (*οἰκονομήσαντος*) of this to the honour of the Father, to whom He appears surrendering all things." It is clear that the matter is here carried outside the range of the divine nature in itself and its requirements, into that of the earthly dispensation or economy of the divine government, which is only distantly related to, and only imperfectly reflects, the divine nature and relationships as they are in themselves. In that economy the death of Christ serves a spiritual purpose in overcoming the devil and bringing men to God. It further fulfils a divine necessity—the nature of which is not explained—that man should be sanctified by the Incarnation. But it at least points to the close relation between the divine nature and that of man.

Abelard (1079–1142) treats of the subject in his *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans* (bk. ii.). He also argues equally strongly against the supposed transaction with the devil, and against any reconciliation of the Father with us on the ground of the death of His innocent Son, dwelling upon the cruelty of demanding the blood of an innocent victim in order to the forgiveness of the guilty. He proceeds to show the moral results of the

wonderful grace shown to us in our Lord's Incarnation and Passion, and sums up as follows: "Thus our redemption is that highest love in us brought about by the Passion of Christ, a love which not only sets us free from the slavery of sin, but acquires for us the true liberty of the sons of God, that we may be filled with love rather than with all fear of Him who showed to us so great grace, than which, on His own witness, none greater can be found."

But Abelard is not always consistent in his expressions. In his *Epitome of Christian Theology* (cap. xxiii.), he says: "Therefore the Son of God came, that as a suitable mediator He might set man free from sin, and implant His own love in him. But this He does by offering the man whom He has taken to Himself to the Father; that is, by giving the man as a price for man." Probably, however, Abelard would have explained this, with Gregory of Nazianzen, as a free offering not demanded by God, nor essentially determining the attitude of God towards men.

Space will not allow of our pursuing this subject through the writings of the MYSTICS. It may suffice to say, that they characteristically regard the sufferings of our Lord as the marks of His freedom from all self-will and self-pleasing; that they set them forth as the subject of devout contemplation, with a view to the reproduction in men of the spirit of Christ. Everywhere the stress is laid upon this reproduction, as that wherein lies the essence of salvation.

PART II

We now pass to the history of the doctrine since the Reformation. This can only be exhibited here in its main outlines. It will conduce to clearness if, as in the former

part, the accounts are grouped so far as possible, instead of being taken in strict chronological order.

I. Symbolic

First should be placed the declarations of the articles and confessions of the different branches of the Christian Church.

1. The Council of Trent (1545–1563) speaks of "Christ, who, when we were enemies, on account of the great love wherewith He loved us, merited justification for us by His most holy Passion on the wood of the cross, and made satisfaction for us to God the Father." [1]

2. The Greek Church, in its *Orthodox Confession* (1672), states that Christ "offered Himself to God and the Father for the redemption of the human race.[2]

3. The *Augsburg Confession* (1530), drawn up by Melanchthon for the Lutherans, declares that the end of our Lord's death was "that He might reconcile the Father to us, and might be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all the actual sins of men." [3]

4. The *Thirty-nine Articles* (1562) of the Church of England simply repeat this last statement. The second Article says: "Who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men."

5. The *Westminster Confession* (1643–1648) lays down that "the Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the eternal Spirit once offered unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of His

[1] "Christus qui cum essemus inimici propter nimiam caritatem qua dilexit nos, nobis sua sanctissima Passione ligno crucis justificationem meruit, et pro nobis Deo Patri satisfecit" (*Conc. Trid. Sess.* vi., c. 7).

[2] Ἑαυτὸν προσενέγκας τῷ Θεῷ καὶ Πατρὶ εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

[3] "Ut reconciliaret nobis Patrem et hostia esset non tantum pro culpâ originis, sed etiam pro omnibus actualibus hominum peccatis."

Father, and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him" (chap. viii. 5).

The language of the various *Reformed Confessions* of the Continent is substantially the same.

The counter declaration of the *Racovian Catechism* of Socinus is that "the liberation through Christ from the penalties of our sins has nothing in common with a satisfaction for those sins, but rather is inconsistent with it."[1]

These quotations are sufficient to show that by the time of the Reformation belief in the Godward significance of the Atonement had become firmly and generally established with all sections of Trinitarian Christians.

II. The Reformers

Next in order, some account must be given of the views held by the leading Reformers.

Luther gives his explanation in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians,* when dealing with the apostle's statement that "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us" (iii. 13). We do not, of course, expect to find scientific accuracy and perfect consistency in Luther's teaching on this, any more than on any other subject which he handles. When he speaks of the Atonement the same characteristics are present which are so marked elsewhere: namely, a perfervid intensity, sometimes breaking through the restraints of both reverence and prudence; a curious mixture of extreme literalism with profound mysticism; and above all, the overmastering sense of perfect deliverance, in Christ, from the condemnation of sin.

[1] *Interrogatio:* An non necesse igitur est, ut pro peccatis nostris divinæ justitiæ satisfaciat? . . . *Responsio:* Immo liberatio per Christum a pœnis peccatorum nostrorum nihil cum satisfactione pro ipsis peccatis commune habet, sed potius cum ipsa pugnat.

1. The first peculiarity of Luther's treatment is to be found in his extreme putting of the fact of our Lord's identification with sinners, and his unshrinking emphasis upon the transference of our sin to Him. This latter sounds loudly a note which had scarcely been heard since St. Paul wrote 2 Corinthians v. 21. The following quotations will illustrate this. "And indeed all the prophets saw this in the Spirit, that Christ would be of all men the greatest robber, murderer, adulterer, thief, sacrilegious person, blasphemer, etc., than whom none greater ever was in the world, because He who is a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world now is not an innocent person, and without sin, is not the Son of God born of the Virgin, but a sinner who has and bears the sin of Paul who was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and violent, of Peter who denied Christ, of David who was an adulterer, a murderer, and made the Gentiles blaspheme the name of the Lord; to sum up, who has and bears all the sins of all men in His own body, not because He committed them, but because He took them, committed by us, upon His own body to make satisfaction for them with His own blood." His proof of this assertion is given thus: "Should any one say, It is extremely absurd and irreverent to call the Son of God a sinner and accursed, I reply, If you wish to deny that He is a sinner and accursed, deny also that He suffered, was crucified, and dead. For it is not less absurd to say that the Son of God (as our faith confesses and prays to Him) was crucified, bore the penalties of sin and death, than to say that He was a sinner and accursed. If, indeed, it is not absurd to confess and believe that Christ was crucified between robbers, neither is it absurd to say that He was accursed and a sinner of sinners." Thus His crucifixion is held to prove that Christ is a sinner, and upon His becoming a sinner death ensues as the penalty of sin. "Wherefore Christ was not only crucified and dead, but also, through divine love, sin was laid upon Him. Sin

having been laid upon Him, the law comes and says, Let every sinner die. So if Thou wilt, O Christ, become surety, be guilty and bear penalty for sinners, bear also sin and curse. Therefore Paul rightly adduces concerning Christ the general law from Moses, 'Every one that hangeth on a tree is accursed of God.' Christ hung upon the tree, therefore Christ is accursed of God."

The conclusion which Luther draws from this is, that sin having been assumed by Christ cannot continue to rest upon sinners, for it cannot be on both Him and them. "If," he says, "the sins of the whole world are on that one man Jesus Christ, then they are not on the world; but if they are not on Him, they are still on the world. So if Christ Himself was made guilty of all the sins which we all have committed, then we were absolved from all sins, yet not through ourselves, our own works or merits, but through Him."

Here Luther seems to overshoot the mark. The logic of the position thus laid down would seem to do away with the necessity of the justifying faith upon which he so strongly insists; for if, as he puts it, the assumption of sin by Christ does in itself absolutely remove it from us, what more can be required in order to our justification? But, as has already been said, we must not seek for system or complete consistency in Luther.

2. But the foregoing simple and extreme explanation is associated with a more mystical doctrine of an inward strife in Christ, between sin and death on the one side, and righteousness and life on the other—a strife which is crowned by the victory of righteousness and life. This conflict is thus described:

"Let us see now how in this person [of Christ] two extreme contraries meet together. There invade it, not only my sins—past, present, and future—and thine, but those of the whole world, and strive to condemn it as also they do condemn it. But because in that same person which is the

highest, greatest, and only sinner, there is also eternal and unconquered righteousness, therefore those two struggle together, the highest, greatest, and only sin and the highest, greatest, and only righteousness. Here it necessarily behoves that one should yield and be conquered, when they meet and come into collision in supreme onslaught. Therefore the sin of the whole world rushes with the greatest onslaught and fury upon righteousness. What happens? Justice is eternal, immortal, and unconquered. Sin is also the mightiest and most cruel tyrant, lording it and reigning in the whole earth, taking captive and reducing all men to its slavery. In sum: sin is the greatest and mightiest god who drains the whole human race, all learned, holy, mighty, wise, unlearned men, etc. This, I say, runs upon Christ, and wills to devour Him like all others; but it does not see that He is the person of unconquered and eternal righteousness. Therefore it is necessary in this war that sin should be conquered and slain, and that righteousness should conquer and live. So in Christ universal sin is conquered, is slain, and is buried, and righteousness remains eternally victorious and regnant.

"So death, which is the omnipotent ruler of the whole earth, killing kings, princes, and indeed all men, attacks life with all its might to conquer and to absorb it, and certainly accomplishes its endeavour. But since life was immortal, the conquered emerged victorious, conquering, and the slayer of death. Of this wonderful war the Church beautifully sings: 'Death and life fought together in wondrous war. The Lord of life, dead, reigns alive!' And so through Christ death was conquered and abolished in the whole world, so that now there is only a painted death, which, having lost its sting, can no more hurt those who believe in Christ, who was made the death of Death, as Hosea sings, 'I will be thy death, O Death.'"

The same explanation, *mutatis mutandis*, is given in

Luther's comment on Galatians iv. 5, of our Lord's victory over the law.

"This, indeed, is a wonderful war, when the law so enters into conflict, the creature with the Creator, and beside all right exercises upon the Son of God all its tyranny which it exercised on us children of wrath. Therefore, because the law so horribly and impiously sinned against its God, it is called to justice and is accused. There Christ says: 'Mistress Law, ruler and most mighty and most cruel queen of the whole human race, what have I done, that thou hast accused, hast terrified and condemned Me, though innocent?' Then the law, which had before condemned and slain all men, when it was without power to defend or purge itself, is in turn so condemned and slain, that it loses its right, not only over Christ (whom it unjustly rages against and kills), but also over all who believe in Him."

In these latter passages we have reminiscences of the ancient conception of our Lord's struggle with the devil, the place of the latter being taken by sin, death, and the law.

PHILIP MELANCHTHON only treated of the Atonement incidentally in his *Loci Communes Theoloci*, in the section on Grace and Justification. The same is true also of Zwingli.

CALVIN'S account of the Atonement is given in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. The method of redemption is determined, according to him, not by any simple or absolute necessity, but by a "heavenly decree, upon which the salvation of men depended. But," he adds, "the most clement Father determined what was best for us" (*Institutes*, lib. ii., cap. 12). He is concerned to deal with the relations between the divine love and wrath towards sinners. On this subject he remarks: "But before we proceed further we must look in passing how it harmonizes that God, who prevents us by His pity, was hostile until

He was reconciled to us through Christ. For how could He have given to us in His only begotten Son a singular pledge of His love, unless He had already beforehand embraced us in gratuitous favour?" His answer is, first of all, that the statements of Scripture, that reconciliation is brought about by the death of Christ, "were accommodated to our sense, in order that we might better understand how miserable and calamitous is our condition out of Christ. For unless it were said in clear words that the anger and sentence of God and eternal death lay upon us, we should the less recognise how miserable we were without the mercy of God, and should count the benefit of liberation at less price" (*Institutes*, lib. ii., cap. 16). But he adds that though this accommodation is used on account of the weakness of our understanding, it is not so used falsely. "For God, who is the highest righteousness, cannot love the iniquity which He beholds in us all. We all have therefore in us what is worthy of the hatred of God. First, according to our corrupt nature, and then on account of our wicked life, we are all truly offensive to God, guilty in His sight, and born to the damnation of hell. But since the Lord does not will to lose in us what is His own, still He finds something which, by reason of His benignity, He loves. For although we are sinners by our vice, we nevertheless remain His creatures. Although we have taken to ourselves death, He nevertheless had fashioned us for life. So by His bare and gratuitous love for us He is moved to receive us into His grace. But if there is a perpetual and irreconcilable discord between righteousness and iniquity, as long as we remain sinners He is unable to receive us wholly; and so in order that, all matter of enmity having been removed, He may further reconcile us to Himself, the expiation in the death of Christ having been set forth, He abolishes whatever of evil is in us, that we who before were unclean and impure may appear just and holy in His sight. First,

God the Father prevents and anticipates by His love our redemption in Christ. In short, because He first loves us He afterwards reconciles us to Himself. But since in us, until Christ rescues us by His death, there remains iniquity which merits the wrath of God, and is in His presence cursed and damned, we have no full and firm union with God until Christ joins us to Him. Therefore if we wish to find God pacified and propitious to us, it behoves us to fix our eyes and minds on Christ alone" (*Institutes*, lib. ii., cap. 16). As to the means by which Christ removed the enmity between us and God, Calvin answers that this must be ascribed generally "to the whole course of His obedience." In proof of this he quotes Romans v. 19; and in further proof that the merit of Christ extends to the whole of His life he cites Galatians iv. 4 (*Institutes*, lib. ii., cap. 16). "This," he says, "is our absolution, that the guilt which held us obnoxious to punishment was transferred to the head of the Son of God" (*ibid.*). But as we have seen in chapter v., he clears himself from any supposition that God was ever wrath with Christ Himself.

From all this it is manifest that Calvin treats the death of Christ as the consequence, and not the cause, of God's love towards sinners; that he regards it as the bearing of the curse which rests upon sin, and as the consummation of a lifelong obedience which has redemptive significance. The whole, however, is so grounded in a decree of the divine will, that, although he lays down that what was determined was the best for us, yet the reason why the love of God demanded the death of Christ in order to redemption is not clearly brought out. Everywhere we find traces of the influence of Augustine on the mind of Calvin, and not least in this insistence upon the love of God as precedent to redemption, coupled with his comparative inability to make clear the reason why, in the nature of things, the death of Christ should be exacted as being the best for us.

III. The Reformed Doctrine

In chapter iv. a statement has been given of the doctrine of the active and the passive righteousness of Christ taught by certain Calvinistic divines; but the quotation there from the Lutheran *Formula Concordiæ* and the passage from Calvin just quoted show that those who first taught the redemptive significance of the active obedience of Christ did not separate it, in function, from the obedience of His death. Nor did the subsequent doctrine ever become universal, even among Calvinists.

To begin with, the view that our Lord's active obedience had a place in the work of our salvation did not pass unchallenged. Karg, a Lutheran pastor, and Piscator opposed it, their contention being based upon the position taken up by Anselm. They argued that Christ, as true man, was under obligation on His own account to render complete obedience to the moral law, and that therefore such obedience only indirectly concerned us. He was, however, not under the obligation to offer the obedience of death, and therefore this latter is accepted as the price of our salvation. When, therefore, redemption is said to be due to our Lord's obedience to the will of God, this they contended should be understood, not of His fulfilment of the moral law, but of His submission to the special mandate that He should make satisfaction and die for the elect. A considerable controversy arose upon this subject.

John Gerhard, in his *Loci Theologici* (Geneva, 1639), in his article "On Justification by Faith," urged at length, that since our Lord "not only died for us, but also (1) did the will of His heavenly Father, (2) fulfilled the law, (3) was made under the law, (4) that by His obedience we might be made righteous, (5) that the justification of the law might be fulfilled in us, (6) since He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, (7)

and has been made to us by God righteousness, (8) in whom we are made righteous," the consequence is, "that not only the passive, but also the active obedience of Christ is our righteousness before God." The *Formula Consensus Helvetica* (1674) claims, in the fifteenth chapter, the authority of Scripture for the statement that Christ, by His most holy life, made satisfaction to the law and to divine righteousness for us, and that the price which He paid for our redemption consists not only in His Passion, but in His whole life of conformity with the law.

Francis Turretin, in his *Institutio Theologiæ Elencticæ* (Geneva, 1688), argues on the question, "whether the satisfaction of Christ is to be restricted to the sufferings and the penalties which He bore on our behalf, or whether it is to be extended to the active obedience by which He perfectly fulfilled the law in the whole of His life"; and decides in favour of the latter, on the ground that "no single action or suffering can be said to be fully meritorious or satisfying, because the concurrence (*concursus*) of perfect obedience is required for it; hence, although various stages and acts can be observed in the obedience of Christ, which He began with His birth, continued in His whole life, and consummated in death, it [the obedience] is nevertheless one, so far as the accomplishment of the work of salvation and the sentence of justification thence proceeding are concerned" (quæst. xiii.).

On the question of Christ's bearing the wrath of God and the pains of hell, Gerhard speaks as follows, when controverting Bellarmine in the above-mentioned work: "We do not, indeed, lay down that Christ, after His death, experienced infernal tortures in His descent into hell, on which point Bellarmine rightly opposes Calvin; yet it is not to be denied that Christ in the time of His Passion and death, but especially in the garden at the foot of Mount Olivet, when He sweated blood, experienced in His most holy soul the bitterest tortures, griefs, terrors, and

truly infernal anguish, and so thoroughly experienced the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and the penalties of hell. For how could He have truly taken our sins upon Himself, and afforded a perfect satisfaction, unless He had truly felt the wrath of God, conjoined by an individual bond with the sins? How could He have redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, unless He had fully experienced the judgment of an angry God?"

QUENSTEDT holds the same view. In his *Theologia Didactico-polemica* he lays down: "The form, or formal reason, of the satisfaction consists in that most exact and sufficient payment of all those things which we owed. For our debt, which Christ our mediator freely took to Himself, and which was imputed to Him by the divine judgment, He, in time, fully paid" ("De Christi Officio," sec. i., thesis xxxviii.). The development of this position in thesis xxxix. characteristically expresses the doctrine generally held among the Protestant theologians of this school:

"But this payment of the whole debt of others, freely undertaken by Christ, and imputed to Him by the divine judgment, was not sufficient because of the divine acceptation of it. For neither did God accept anything in this satisfaction which was not such in itself, on the ground of His liberality, nor did He remit anything from His right in the exaction of the penalty due by us and presented by our representative. But what the rigour of His justice demanded, all that Christ in His satisfaction sustained; so much so, that He felt even the very pains of hell, although not in hell or eternally. A certain combination of mercy and of divine justice, and a relaxation to a certain extent of the law, is indeed manifest in this, that the Son of God Himself stood as our representative and satisfier; that the satisfaction offered by Him was accepted as ours, that another person was substituted in

place of the debtors; this, indeed, in no way detracts from the satisfaction in itself."

On the redemptive functions of the active and passive righteousness of Christ, and on the nature of His atoning sufferings, TURRETIN, whom Dr. Dale calls with justice "the greatest of Calvinistic theologians," speaks with caution. As to the former, he lays down "that that obedience of Christ has a double force of satisfaction and of merit; the former by which we are set free from the penalties we incur through sin, the latter by which a right to life and eternal salvation through the removal of sin is acquired for us." "For although," he continues, "these two benefits flowing from the obedience of Christ are joined in the covenant of grace by an indissoluble bond, so that no one can obtain the remission of sins who does not follow on to the right to life, they are not therefore to be confounded as though they were one and the same thing, but are to be distinguished, because it is one thing to set free from death, another to introduce to life,—one thing to lead forth from hell, another to bring to heaven. . . . But although we confess that these two benefits are to be distinguished, we do not consider nevertheless that it should be anxiously inquired by what acts He made satisfaction or acquired merit, as some do who attribute satisfaction to His sufferings, but merit to His actions alone, so that through the former He freed us from death, but through the latter acquired for us the right to life, since the Scripture nowhere seems to distinguish the obedience of Christ into parts, but sets it forth as one, by which Christ presented all those things which the law could require from us." He adds, that satisfaction demanded "both the observance of the commandments and the suffering of penalties, by which liberation from death and the right to life were acquired for us" (*Institutio.* pars. ii., locus xix., quæst. xiii.). As to the sufficiency of the satisfaction of Christ, he says that it consists in

respect of its parts as including His active and passive obedience, and in respect of its stages, "so that nothing can be further desired in it on account of the dignity of the person making the satisfaction, and the gravity of the punishment endured." The sufficiency of the satisfaction is shown (1) by the dignity of the satisfying person, (2) by the unity of His oblation, (3) by the approval of God the Judge specially manifested in the resurrection, and (4) by its saving effects (*ibid.*).

IV. Socinus.

The leading controversy on the part of the Reformed theologians was with the Socinians. The teaching of Socinus may be fully learnt from the *Racovian Catechism*, and from his treatise, *De Jesu Christo Servatore*. In the former the subject is discussed in connexion with the priestly office of Christ. Socinus lays it down that our Lord only entered upon His priesthood at His ascension; that therefore His death was not a priestly act in itself, but simply the means by which he entered into His priesthood. "I say therefore, that the oblation of Christ, by which our sins are said to have been expiated, was not accomplished on the cross and by the shedding there of His blood, as is commonly thought, but in heaven, and by the presentation of Himself there in the presence of God for us." His expiation is said "to be contained in that care with which He, abiding in heaven, assiduously deals with our concerns." "Christ expiates our sins because He sets us free from their penalties." Expiation so understood has clearly, as Socinus shows, nothing in common with satisfaction. Not only so, but the two are incompatible with one another. "For there cannot be a greater mutual opposition than between free remission or condonation and satisfaction." To assert the necessity of satisfaction disparages either the majesty or the benignity

of God. In the *De Jesu Christo Servatore* he argues (chap. i.) that justice and mercy, as used in the Scripture, are compatible with one another. The sentence of death on account of sin does not flow of necessity from the righteousness of God, but from His free will, and therefore can be set aside by the same free will. In addition to the will of God, nothing is necessary to salvation beyond our faith and obedience. According to the *Catechism*, God is said to have shown Himself placated towards us in Christ; the expression, "in Christ," being used, "first, because through Christ God announces to us, bears witness, and confirms His free and full placation towards us and our sins; secondly, because we are made members of Christ by faith and by our participation in the spirit of His obedience; and, thirdly, because through Christ God causes us to feel the whole effect of His placation, and leads us to His last and perfect departure and end." Christ is said to be our Saviour because of His example, and because in all dangers and temptations He cherishes and helps us, and at length sets us free from eternal death. The first chapter of the treatise lays down that Christ is our Saviour for five reasons: that He announces salvation to us, confirms it, gives to us an example to imitate, brings to us the assurance of salvation by His resurrection, and actually confers eternal life upon us. The second part of the treatise is largely occupied in explaining away all language in Scripture which seems to bear the sense of a satisfaction offered to God for sin. And the third part claims to prove that God could rightly forgive sins without satisfaction, and has actually willed to do so, and concludes by giving reasons for the rejection of any doctrine of vicarious satisfaction; in particular opposing the idea that the sufferings of Christ were equivalent to those remitted to us.

From all this it comes to pass that, for Socinus, the resurrection has greater practical importance than the death

of Christ. "Through His resurrection Jesus has been exalted by God to be Prince of life and Saviour" (bk. i., chap. i.). "The death of Christ is called the purchase price, although the death of Christ, not followed by the resurrection, not only would not have liberated us, but would altogether have taken away any hope of liberation." The emphasis on the death of Christ is due to its being the most striking manifestation of His love and of God's, and is the means of binding us more closely to Himself.

Such is an outline of the main positions taken up by Socinus. The general objections urged by him against the doctrine of satisfaction and of the vicarious sacrifice have been summarised in chapter v.

V. The Rejoinder of the Reformed Theologians to Socinus.

The general answers to the Socinian contentions may perhaps be fairly exhibited by showing how the subject is dealt with by Turretin. Omitting the exegetical questions, which need not be dealt with here, the three principal questions raised by the Socinians were: The necessity of satisfaction; its compatibility with remission; and the justice of substitution. These subjects are dealt with by Turretin in his *Institutio* (pars. ii., locus xiv.), "De Officio Christi Mediatoris," quæstio x, "De Necessitate Satisfactionis." His definition of satisfaction is, that it is not here a reparation for an offence, but means strictly the payment of a debt, "by which what some one owes is paid, and by which he satisfies the creditor or the judge demanding the debt or punishment." Turretin following, as he says, "the common opinion of the orthodox," lays down the necessity of such a satisfaction, on the ground that God not only is unwilling to give to us remission of sins without it, but is unable to do so with justice. The nature of sin being threefold,—namely, a debt, enmity against God,

and a crime,—satisfaction must be the payment of the debt, the placation of the divine wrath, the expiation of guilt. God can be considered, therefore, either as a creditor, or as lord and offended party, or as judge and ruler. In this case we are to regard Him pre-eminently as judge and ruler.

Against the Socinians, who deny not only the necessity, but the fact of satisfaction, and against those who, following Calvin, set up a "hypothetical necessity" on account of the decree of God, Turretin contends that there is a moral and spiritual necessity for the satisfaction of Christ, because of (1) the vindicatory justice of God, which is "a constant will to punish" ("He necessarily exacts the infliction of punishment either on the sinner himself or on a surety substituted for him"); (2) the nature of sin—for ill follows naturally and appropriately upon moral evil; (3) the sanction of the law, which the truth of God must uphold; (4) the preaching of the gospel, which announces the fact of satisfaction, and therefore confirms its necessity *à posteriori*; (5) because, otherwise, the greatness of the love of God commended to us by the Scriptures would be diminished; and (6) because our hatred of sin and love to God are increased by it. "It is one thing for a person to remit anything from his own right, another from justice. God can remit from His own right; not absolutely, however, but so far as the consideration of justice, that nothing unjust should be done, permits it. But justice does not permit sin to be remitted without satisfaction, because so the majesty of the law is violated, and what belongs to sin is not rendered to it. Secondly, He cannot always remit from His own right if the right is public not private, of the judge not of the lord, natural not free, of honour not utility. But the right of punishment in God is not the private right of a creditor or a lord, is not free and positive, is not of private utility, but of public honour, is the right of the ruler and

judge which is founded in nature itself, as has been seen above."

The necessity of satisfaction being thus established, the general possibility of substitution and the compatibility of satisfaction with gracious forgiveness are likewise established. "Punishment itself" is to be distinguished from "the mode and circumstance of punishment." "For although a sinful person altogether deserves punishment, and can be justly punished, it is nevertheless not so necessary and indispensable but that for certain defined and grave causes there may be a transference of punishment to a surety. And in this sense it is said by theologians that it is necessary that punishment should be inflicted *impersonally* on all sin, but not immediately *personally* on every sinner." This latitude is possible to God because He is "not as an inflictor or subordinate judge, constituted under the law, who is not able to dispense with the rigour of the law by transferring punishment to another, but as highest or supreme judge, who, as He wishes to satisfy His justice through the punishment of sin, so, because of His supreme wisdom and pity, was able to relax the exact justice of the law by releasing sinners from the punishment due, and by transferring it to a sponsor." The compatibility of such a satisfaction with free forgiveness is found in this, that sin is not only a debt, but a crime, and that satisfaction for it is therefore not of such a kind as in itself to liberate the debtor, unless the mildness (ἐπιείκεια) of the judge, and remission, are added. "Because that very thing which is the obligation is not paid by the penalty belonging to it, which the righteous law with strict justice demanded, but only a vicarious punishment." Such a satisfaction could only be rendered on two conditions: "first, that it should be paid by the same nature which had sinned; secondly, that it should be of value, and even of infinite price, for removing the infinite demerit of sin." Under these conditions, and

they are fulfilled in Christ, such a substituted satisfaction is just. There are examples of it, such as Damon and Pythias, Q. Curtius, etc., in secular history, to which St. Paul refers when he says, "For a good man some would even dare to die" (Rom. v. 7); but the chief examples are those of the sacrifices. The following conditions are necessary in the substitute, and are fulfilled by Christ: (1) community of nature; (2) consent of will; (3) power of lordship over His own members; (4) the power of bearing all the penalties due to us, and of bearing them away both from Himself and us; (5) immaculate sanctity and purity. Under these conditions Turretin contends that "the substitution of Christ the righteous for us, the unrighteous, is not unjust. Not to Christ, for His sufferings were voluntary; He had the power of self-determination, and He was recompensed by the resurrection: not to God the judge, who willed and commanded this satisfaction; or to His natural right, which is safeguarded by the punishment of the substitute: not to the republic of the world, for it is not deprived of its best citizen, since Christ lives eternally: not to the divine law, for it is fulfilled by Christ and by our double union, natural and forensic or mystical, with Him." Such is the masterly and characteristic defence of the general position of the orthodox of his time offered by Turretin. A quotation from the *Larger Catechism* of the Westminster Assembly will suffice for the further illustration of this position. Question 71 asks, "How is justification an act of God's free grace?" And the answer is: "Although Christ, by His obedience and death, did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in the behalf of them that are justified; yet inasmuch as God accepteth the satisfaction from a surety which He might have demanded of them, and did provide this surety, His only Son, imputing His righteousness to them, and requiring nothing of them for their justification but faith, which

also is His gift, their justification is to them of free grace."

The general point of view of GROTIUS, in his *Defensio Fidei Catholica de Satisfactione Christi adversus Faustum Socinum senensem*, has been discussed in chapter iv. It is sufficient here to point out how his answer to Socinus differs from the ordinary position taken up, as, for example, by Turretin. In the first place, Grotius altogether dismisses from the relationships between God and man concerned, not only that of creditor, but even that of judge, and regards Him entirely as a ruler. Secondly, he admits the Socinian contention that Christ did not suffer equivalent punishment to that which is remitted to the redeemed; he treats His satisfaction as a "relaxation," not merely in respect of the person of whom it was demanded, but also in respect of what was demanded of Him. This relaxation is an additional element of the grace of redemption. Lastly, the ends sought by the Atonement are represented, not as those of justice which even God must maintain, but as those of the ruler. This is his account of the matter: "But because, among all the attributes of God, love of the human race stands first, therefore God, though He could justly punish the sins of all men by a worthy and legitimate punishment, that is, by eternal death, and was moved to do so, willed to spare those who believe on Christ. But when it was determined to spare them, either by instituting or not some example against so many and so great sins, *He most wisely chose that way by which the greatest number of His attributes might be manifested at the same time; namely, both His clemency and His severity or hatred of sin, and His concern for maintaining the law*" (*Defensio*, chap. v.).

The Socinian controversy was sustained against Grotius by CRELL. The later Arminian theologians, CURCELLÆUS and LIMBORCH, adopted the governmental view of the Atonement and the Socinian objections to the "equivalence"

of the sufferings of Christ. The former is thus stated by Curcellæus:

"For although God could have remitted to us all our sins by His bare will, nevertheless, that He might show how greatly He hated sin, and might deter us from it more efficaciously for the future, He was unwilling to do so without the intervention of that sacrifice which Christ offered in His slain body" (*Institutio Religionis Christianæ*, lib. v., cap. xix., sec. xiv.).

But the conception of the *sacrifice* suggests a point which had not had prominence previously. Curcellæus says that Christ "did not therefore, as is commonly thought, make satisfaction by suffering all the penalties which we had merited by our sins. For, in the first place, that does not belong to the nature of a sacrifice, and has nothing in common with it. For sacrifices are not payments of debts, as is evident from those of the law. The beasts which were slain for sinners did not pay the penalties which they had deserved, nor was their blood a sufficient ransom for the souls of men; but they were real offerings, by which men endeavoured to turn God to compassion, and to obtain from Him remission of sins" (sec. xv.).

To the same effect, Limborch (*Theologia Christiana*, lib. iii., cap. xvi., sec. vi.).

VI. English Theology

On this head little need be said here.

1. Anglican Theology.—The most representative divines accepted the current explanation of the Atonement as a satisfaction to divine justice. Richard Hooker says: "Satisfaction is a work which justice requireth to be done for contentment of persons injured: neither is it in the eye of justice a sufficient satisfaction, unless it fully equal the injury for which we satisfy. Seeing then that sin against God eternal and infinite must needs be an infinite wrong,

justice in regard thereof doth necessarily exact an infinite recompense, or else inflict upon the offender infinite punishment. Now because God was thus to be satisfied, and man not able to make satisfaction in such sort, His unspeakable love and inclination to save mankind from eternal death ordained in our behalf a Mediator to do that which had been for any other impossible. Wherefore all sin is remitted in the only faith of Christ's Passion, and no man without belief thereof justified. Faith alone maketh Christ's satisfaction ours; howbeit that faith alone, which after sin maketh us by conversion His" (*Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, bk. vi., chap. v.).

To the same effect, Pearson says in his *Exposition of the Creed*: "We all had sinned, and so offended the justice of God, and by an act of that justice the sentence of death passed upon us; it was necessary therefore that Christ our surety should die, to satisfy the justice of God, both for that iniquity, as the propitiation for our sins, and for that penalty, as He which was to bear our griefs. God was offended with us, and He must die who was to reconcile Him to us" (Art. iv., "He was dead").

So Butler, in his *Analogy of Religion*, lays it down that our Lord "interposed in such a manner as was necessary and effectual to prevent that execution of justice upon sinners which God had appointed should otherwise have been executed upon them: or in such a manner as to prevent that punishment from actually following, which, according to the general laws of divine government, must have followed the sins of the world, had it not been for such interposition" (*Analogy*, pt. ii., chap. v.).

But the following quotations show that Butler took the view common in Anglican theology, that the grounds of the Atonement have not been revealed. He remarks: "How, and in what particular way, it had this efficacy, there are not wanting persons who have endeavoured to explain; but I do not find that the Scripture has explained

it. We seem to be very much in the dark concerning the manner in which the ancients understood Atonement to be made, *i.e.* pardon to be obtained by sacrifices. And if the Scripture has, as surely it has, left this matter of the satisfaction of Christ mysterious, left somewhat in it unrevealed, all conjectures about it must be, if not evidently absurd, yet at least uncertain. Nor has any one reason to complain for want of further information, unless he can show his claim to it" (*ibid.*).

"Whereas the doctrine of the gospel appears to be, not only that He [Christ] taught the efficacy of repentance, but rendered it of the efficacy which it is by what He did and suffered for us: that He obtained for us the benefit of having our repentance accepted unto eternal life: not only that He revealed to sinners that they were in a capacity of salvation, and how they might obtain it, but, moreover, that He put them into this capacity of salvation by what He did and suffered for them; put us into a capacity of escaping future punishment, and obtaining future happiness. And it is our wisdom thankfully to accept the benefit, by performing the conditions upon which it is offered on our part, without disputing how it was procured on His" (*ibid.*).

This position, as recently stated, is criticised in the note at the end of the Appendix.

2. The PURITAN theology followed the general lines of the Reformed divines who have already been considered.

3. The theology of the SOCIETY OF FRIENDS presents no original features as to the doctrine of the Atonement. Robert Barclay, in his *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, thus expresses the belief of those to whom he speaks: "Nevertheless, as we firmly believe it was necessary that Christ should come, that by His death and sufferings He might offer up Himself a sacrifice to God for our sins, 'who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree'; so we believe that the remission of

sins, which any partake of, is only in and by virtue of that most satisfactory sacrifice, and not otherwise" (On Propositions v. and vi., sec. xv.).

But the Friends laid the main stress rather upon inward than upon objective redemption. Thus Barclay lays down in his seventh proposition that redemption is twofold: "The first is the redemption performed and accomplished by *Christ for us*, in His crucified body without us; the other is the redemption wrought by *Christ in us*, which no less properly is called and accounted a redemption than the latter."

4. No distinctive contribution to the doctrine of the Atonement has been made by METHODIST writers. Wesley was occupied rather with the doctrines of salvation which grow out of the Atonement, and assumed the explanation of the death of Christ as a satisfaction of divine justice, in the general sense of English theology, expressed, for example, in the passage quoted above from Pearson. Thus his references to the doctrine of the Atonement are incidental, and not systematic. The following passage may be quoted from his sermon on "The Lord our Righteousness":

"But His [Christ's] obedience implied more than all this. It implied not only doing, but suffering; suffering the whole will of God, from the time He came into the world till 'He bore our sins in His own body upon the tree'; yea, till, having made a full Atonement for them, 'He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.' This is usually termed the *passive* righteousness of Christ; the former, His *active* righteousness. But as the active and passive righteousness of Christ were never, in fact, separated from each other, so we never need separate them at all, either in speaking or even in thinking. And it is with regard to both these conjointly that Jesus is called 'the Lord our righteousness.'"

Richard Watson, as is clearly seen from his *Theological Institutes*, was deeply influenced by Grotius; but he en-

deavours to correct the excessive stress laid by the latter upon governmental considerations, and to find the means of associating the claims of God's own "holy and righteous character" with "the needs of law and government," accepting the doctrine of equivalence, or adequate compensation, "when soberly interpreted." The following quotation well illustrates his judgment of the ends safeguarded by the Atonement; and it is noticeable that he points to "the benefit of the creature himself" as necessitating the maintenance of righteousness:

"With respect to God's right to be obeyed, nothing can be more obvious than that the perfect rectitude of His nature forbids Him to give up that right, or to relax it at all. No king can morally give up his right to be obeyed in the full degree which may be enjoined by the laws of his kingdom. No parent can give up his right to obedience, in things lawful, from his children, and be blameless. In either case, if this be done voluntarily, it argues an indifference to that principle of rectitude on which such duties depend, and therefore a moral imperfection. This cannot be attributed to God, and therefore He never can yield up His right to be obeyed; which is both agreeable to abstract rectitude, and is, moreover, for the benefit of the creature himself, as the contrary would be necessarily injurious to him. But may He not give up His right to punish, when disobedience has actually taken place? Only, it is manifest, where He would not appear by this to give up His claim to obedience, which would be a winking at offence; and where He has not absolutely bound Himself to punish. But neither of these can occur here. It is only by punitive acts that the supreme Governor makes it certain that He stands upon His right to be obeyed, and that He will not relax it" (*Theological Institutes*, pt. ii., chap. xix., p. 13).

The more recent English CALVINISTS, for example Wardlaw and Pye Smith, base their explanation of the Atonement upon rectoral righteousness, regarding our Lord's

death as the means by which sin may be forgiven, without prejudice to the government of God.

VII. President Edwards

A brief reference must be made to President Edwards, the great American representative of Calvinism. His guarded statement as to the way in which our Lord suffered the wrath of God is worthy of note. "Christ suffered the wrath of God for men's sins in such a way as He was capable of, being an infinitely holy person, who knew that God was not angry with Him personally, but infinitely loved Him. The wicked in hell will suffer the wrath of God, as they will have the sense, and knowledge, and sight of God's infinite displeasure towards, and hatred of them. But this was impossible in Jesus Christ. Christ could bear the wrath of God in no other but these two ways; namely, in having a great and *clear sight* of the infinite wrath of God against the sins of men and the punishment they deserved, and in enduring the *effects* of that wrath" (*Concerning the Necessity and Reasonableness of the Christian Doctrine of Satisfaction for Sin*, sec. xxxi.).

"Another way in which it was possible that Christ should endure the wrath of God was to endure the *effects* of that wrath. All that He suffered was by the special ordering of God. There was a very visible hand of God in letting men and devils loose upon Him at such a rate, and in separating Him from His own disciples. Thus it pleased the Father to bruise Him and put Him to grief. God dealt with Him as if He had been exceedingly angry with Him, and as though He had been the object of His dreadful wrath. This made all the sufferings of Christ the more terrible to Him, because they were from the hand of His Father, whom He infinitely loved, and of whose infinite love He had had eternal experience. Besides, it was an *effect* of God's wrath that He forsook Christ. This

caused Christ to cry out, '*My God, My God*, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' This was infinitely terrible. Christ's knowledge of the glory of the Father, and His love to the Father, and the sense and experience He had had of the worth of the Father's love to Him, made the withholding the pleasant ideas and manifestations of His Father's love as terrible to Him as the sense and knowledge of His hatred is to the damned, that have no knowledge of God's excellency, no love to Him, nor any experience of the infinite sweetness of His love" (*ibid.*, sec. xxxv.).

His statement as to the pains of sympathy endured by Christ has been quoted in chapter iii.

VIII. Schleiermacher

This Appendix would be incomplete without a reference to Schleiermacher. He describes his own view of the Atonement as "mystical." He defines redemption as being the taking of believers into the power of the Redeemer's consciousness of God (*Der Christliche Glaube*, ii., sec. 100). Atonement is said to be the taking of believers into fellowship with the Redeemer's unclouded blessedness (*ibid.*, ii., sec. 101). Of our Lord's high-priestly office, we are told that "as for the whole Jewish people the high priest alone appeared directly before God, and God saw the whole people, as it were, only in him; so is Christ also, on this account, a High Priest, that God sees us not each for himself, but only in Him" (*ibid.*, sec. 104). But he adds that on account of Christ's life in us "the impulse" to fulfil the divine will "is active in us also," and his treatment of the relation of believers to the atoning work of Christ seems open to the charge that the satisfying power of the Atonement lies in its being the complete expression of the impulse of obedience in us, rather than that the latter has all its worth because of the sacrifice of Christ.

For a full discussion of this view, see Dr. A. B. Bruce on *The Humiliation of Christ*, lect. vii.

To deal with the philosophy of redemption as it is presented by the German transcendentalists, or with recent contributions to the discussion of the Atonement made by British writers, would require too much space, and be beyond the scope of this Appendix. Sufficient has been written to answer the purposes for which it was undertaken: namely, to show how the theology of the Church upon this subject advanced from extreme diversity to comparative agreement; how the various accounts have been conditioned by the view of the relationships between God and mankind which were prevalent with the writers; and, lastly, how many difficulties are raised, and how many problems are left unsolved until justice is done to the highest relationship of all.

NOTE

On the Recent Tendency to Regard the Nature of the Atonement as Incomprehensible

The number of those who regard the reasons and nature of the Atonement as unexplained, and, at present, inexplicable, is constantly increasing. Among those who hold this view are to be found distinguished representatives of all theological and ecclesiastical parties. Coleridge, in recent times, led the way in his *Aids to Reflection*, as the following quotation will show. Speaking of redemption, he says: "The mysterious act, the operative cause transcendent. *Factum est:* and beyond the information contained in the enunciation of the FACT, it can be characterised only by the consequences."[1] A transcendent cause is defined by him as "a cause beyond our comprehension, and

[1] *Aids to Reflection: Aphorisms on Spiritual Religion*, com. cxviii. c.

not within the sphere of sensible experience." To the same effect Dr. William Magee, Archbishop of Dublin, representing a very different general line of thought, says that to the question as to the way in which the death of Christ operates to the remission of sins, "the answer of the Christian is: 'I know not, nor does it concern me to know, *in what manner* the sacrifice of Christ is connected with the forgiveness of sins: it is enough that this is declared by God to be the medium through which my salvation is effected. I pretend not to dive into the counsels of the Almighty. I submit to His wisdom; and I will not reject His grace because His mode of vouchsafing it is not within my comprehension.'"[1] He says further: "Neither the sacrifice nor the intercession has, so far as we can comprehend, any efficacy whatever. All that we know or can know, of the one or of the other, is that it has been appointed as the means by which God has determined to act with respect to man." And he, with many others, speaks of the Atonement as an "expedient," a word which can only suggest the absence of any intrinsic necessity. In a different temper of mind, but to the same effect, the late Dean Church writes: "As far as I understand the difficulty, it is this: How could our Lord *really* have sympathised in *all* human pain, when He could not, by supposition, have known that which gives it its worst sting—its apparent uselessness and its helplessness? Well, I can only say that I cannot form the faintest conception how, in the actual depths of that divine suffering nature, all human pain was borne, and shared, and understood. I can only see it from the outside. I see the suffering; I am told, on His authority, what it means and involves. I can, if I like, and as has often been done, go on and make a theory

[1] Discourse I., *On the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice.* This is the standpoint of Warburton. See *The Divine Legation of Moses,* bk. ix., Introduction, quoted by Principal Cave in his *Scriptural Doctrines of Sacrifice.*

how He bore our sins, and *how* He gained their forgiveness, and *how* He took away the sins of the world. But I own that the longer I live the more my mind recoils from such efforts. It seems to me so idle, so, in the very nature of our condition, hopeless, just in proportion as one seems to grasp more really the true nature of all that went on beyond the visible sight of the cross, all that was in Him who was God and man, whose capacities and inner life human experience cannot reach or reflect. But one of the thoughts which pass sometimes through our minds about the sufferings of the cross is, What *could* be the necessity of such suffering? What *was* the use of it? How, with infinite power, could not its ends have been otherwise attained? Why need He have suffered? Why could not the Father save Him from that hour? Did that thought in the limitations and 'emptying' (Phil. ii. 7) of the Passion pass through His mind too?"[1] The mystery which baffled Dr. Church is a confirmation of the truth to Mr. Arthur Balfour. "Because," he says, "they cannot compress within the rigid limits of some semi-legal formula a mystery which, unless it were too vast for our full intellectual comprehension, would surely be too narrow for our spiritual needs—the mystery itself is to be rejected. Because they cannot contrive to their satisfaction a system of theological jurisprudence which shall include redemption as a leading case, redemption is no longer to be counted among the consolations of mankind."[2]

But the most detailed setting forth of this position is given by Dr. R. F. Horton, in his "Essay on the Atonement," which is one of the collection of Congregational essays entitled *Faith and Criticism*. There he says: "The object of the present essay is to advocate this sobriety of assertion in dealing with the question of the Atonement. It may be a duty on the one hand to maintain that the death of Christ

[1] Dr. R. W. Church, *Life and Letters*, p. 274.
[2] *Foundations of Belief*, p. 259.

is the means by which sin is pardoned and reconciliation between God and men effected, and yet on the other hand to own that no real explanation of it can be found. We may be required to preach 'Christ, and Him crucified,' and to glory in nothing but the cross, as St. Paul did, and yet scrupulously to abstain from interpretations of the fact. If explanations lessen its efficacy by injuring its credibility, it is better to place the method of reconciliation among the mysteries of God, which men and angels desire to search into in vain."[1] Dr. Horton boldly says, "The New Testament has no theory about the Atonement."[2] On the other hand, he sees clearly that the force of the Atonement as a declaration of the love of God depends upon its inherent necessity. He remarks: "But if that suffering had no essential relation to men's redemption, if it had no objective efficacy in securing a positive and beneficial result, it would cease to appeal to men as an example of love. We should see no very convincing proof that a friend loved us, in the fact that he subjected himself to a needless suffering. The demonstration of love lies in the conviction that the suffering was for our good."[3] Therefore he replies to those who say, "We see no need of an Atonement if we repent of our sins": "If *you* see no need for an Atonement, evidently God does, and His final revelation to man is precisely this fact of Atonement accomplished as the ground of our salvation."[4] Hence "the contention of Christianity is, that the facts we have had before us are precisely the revelation of God's nature, which is otherwise unknown; and at the centre of those facts is that mysterious sacrifice of Christ which God Himself appointed as a propitiation to show His righteousness, because of the 'passing over of the sins done aforetime.'"[5] Yet he lays down that "we are entirely out of our depth in any discussion of the subject."[5] But, as a compensa-

[1] *Faith and Criticism*, p. 188. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 222. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 234.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 239, 240. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 239.

tion for this, he concludes: "Still one other consideration remains which may incline thoughtful men to grasp and to proclaim the fact of the Atonement, even if confessedly they can furnish no satisfactory theory of it. It is this: the history of the Church furnishes repeated evidence that the preaching of Christ and Him crucified, in the way which we have noted throughout this essay, has been the occasion and the means of all decision, extension, and rapid establishment of the kingdom."[1]

1. The criticism which arises first upon all these passages is that the impression produced by them is strikingly unlike that which the teaching of Holy Scripture naturally creates. The atmosphere of the one is totally unlike that of the other. There is in Holy Scripture no treatment of the fact of the Atonement as "transcendent," in Coleridge's sense, still less as being an "expedient." There is no sign that the meaning and purpose of the death of Christ is regarded, whether wistfully or with complacency, as an incomprehensible mystery. Everywhere the Atonement is treated "by the light that shines in itself," to use Dr. M'Leod Campbell's striking phrase. The death of Christ is regarded throughout as a sin offering, consisting of sufferings and death on the objective side, and of perfected obedience on the subjective; and to this offering correspond propitiation, the putting away of sin, and redemption. And the whole manner of the writers conveys the assumption that if the connexion of the former with the latter is not explained, it is not because the grounds and nature of it are hidden, but because they are too clear to require explanation. The minds of the apostles were steeped in sacrificial associations, so that their sacrificial intuitions were well-nigh instinctive. The glory of the redemptive facts—that which they had seen with their eyes, and their hands had handled of the Word of life—filled the whole of their spiritual consciousness, and

[1] *Faith and Criticism*, p. 240.

awakened the fresh and almost exuberant response of a spiritual experience which was absolutely new. The redemptive facts, and their own consequent experience, they read immediately in the light of those sacrificial intuitions which were nature to them. Is it not therefore just what might have been expected, that there should be in the apostolic writings no elaborate theory suitable for a theological treatise, but rather the materials out of which it must be constructed? The absence of a theory, in reasoned form, is its presence in the form of intuition And thus the very absence of demonstration argues here, as is often the case, exceeding clearness of apprehension, and not the deliberate limitation of themselves by the writers to the enjoyment of facts which they felt themselves helpless to explain. It is only in this way that such language as St. Peter's, that the blood of Christ is as that "of a lamb without blemish and without spot,"[1] or St. Paul's, that the propitiation is "*to show* the righteousness of God,"[2] can be understood. The former makes it clear that the death of Christ is interpreted by the analogy of the Jewish sacrifices; and the propitiation can only declare the righteousness of God provided that the principles contained in it are manifest enough to set that righteousness in clear light. Again, St. Paul's characteristic doctrine of the union of believers with Christ in His death and resurrection demands as its condition a spiritual sympathy with the death of Christ which can only be based upon insight into its meaning.

2. But, in the next place, the view in question is in contradiction to the fundamental principle of the Incarnation. The possibility of the Incarnation rests in the last resort upon the Fatherhood of God towards men, and upon the consequent kinship between human nature and the divine. It is because of that kinship that God can be expressed, so to speak, in terms of human nature; that the

[1] 1 Pet. i. 19. [2] Rom. iii. 25.

words "epiphany," "revelation," "manifestation" can be constantly employed in reference to the Incarnation. But if God is to be revealed to man, and if man is to be revealed in his ideal relations to God (and both these things are implied in the Incarnation), the relationship in which God stands to men the principles upon which He acts towards them in consequence of that relationship, the dealings which embody those principles, must be "writ large" in the life and work of Christ. To withdraw the whole of the redemptive work of Christ from the mind of men, as a "transcendent fact," is to do a twofold wrong to the principle of the Incarnation. It is to withhold the dealings of God with the representative Head of mankind from knowledge, and therefore to leave the relations of God with the race represented by Christ in darkness; it is also to degrade the remnant which is conceded to be really manifest in the life and death of Christ. For, on the supposition, all this is of secondary importance. That which *appears* in the life and death of Christ is not or may not be the real cause of the redemptive effect. We see the death of Christ required and offered to God. But when we ask why the death was required, and what there was in it which made it an availing propitiation, we are told that all this is beyond our ken.

Then the human side of the great event does not necessarily correspond to the divine side. The latter is transcendent, and therefore inscrutable. Hence the Incarnation manifests everything except that most essential matter, which would have indeed thrown fullest light upon the whole character of God and upon His demand of men; namely, why it was that He required the death of Christ in order to the forgiveness of sin. The Incarnation, then, can reveal all of God save the ground in His character of His most awful demand and of His most "unspeakable gift," and the life-experience of "the man Christ Jesus" can render to man an account of

itself at every moment save its most solemn. And yet at that most solemn moment, and throughout that inscrutable dealing with God, *He remained human.* Can God be called fatherly if he withheld the knowledge of this most momentous dealing with His Son on our behalf? or, if the withholding was due to the incapacity of human nature to express or to apprehend the secret, can human nature be any longer looked upon as in any worthy sense filial and akin to God? The life of fatherhood and of sonship is in mutual fellowship; fellowship is real so far as "heart speaks to heart" of its inmost thoughts and purposes, and of its most important proceedings. The fellowship that remains after all these are withdrawn may be that of the nursery, in "first principles" fit for babes, but cannot be in that "perfection" which is the satisfaction of maturity.

3. It will be much if the integrity of what remains of the prophetical office of Christ can be maintained, when His death is pronounced to be an enigma insoluble by man. If the rest of the building tumbles down, the shock will make even this part to totter. How is it that the relationships and the attributes of God, which are manifest in the life of Christ, will not explain His death, which follows naturally upon His life and crowns it? The death belongs to the natural order equally with the life; the life belongs to the nupernatural order equally with the death. How is it that the one is luminous and the other not? Would not the inevitable inference ultimately be that the difference is apparent and not real; that the revelation of God in the life of Christ is but an "economy," an accommodation relative to us, which does not correspond to the absolute truth of God? Surely if the revelation of God, which is conceded as being present in the life of Christ, is valid, the best test that can be applied to it is to use it for the explanation of Christ's death. Let it not be objected that such an argument assumes that God and His purposes and deeds must be entirely intelligible to man. It does not;

though men should be circumspect in their assertions that the ways of God not only have not been, but cannot in the nature of the case be understood by men. But here we are concerned with God's *dealings with us* in the person of our Representative—with His dealings towards Him whose history is a *revelation* of God. That *just these dealings* should be unintelligible, and yet that the revelation should be pronounced real and final, seems inexplicable.

There is, of course, truth in Mr. Balfour's remark that unless the mystery of the Atonement "were too vast for our full intellectual apprehension" it "would surely be too narrow for our spiritual needs," and in his further suggestion that it is impossible to contrive "a system of theological jurisprudence which shall include redemption as a leading case." Undoubtedly the apprehension of the truth of God grows with our growth. Fully to comprehend His ways is impossible, unless we fully comprehend God Himself. To pronounce our knowledge complete is therefore to offend against those spiritual instincts of our finite nature which compel us in the pursuit of the knowledge of God, as much as in our aspirations after His service and likeness, to forget those things which are behind and to reach out after those things which are before. But the incentive of that pursuit is not the mystery, but the knowledge. It is because a beginning has been made that we are stirred to seek advance. Unrelieved mystery may conceivably cause pain, or more probably indifference, but certainly never the satisfaction of spiritual needs.

It is quite true that redemption cannot be shown to be a leading case in a "system of theological jurisprudence," because the relationship existing and the ends sought have a "breadth and length and depth and height" which is utterly unknown to jurisprudence, even if qualified as theological. The qualification is misleading, for the attempts, which Mr. Balfour dismisses with contempt, have, strictly speaking, been, not

to construct a theological jurisprudence, but to show that redemption is either intended to fulfil, or is compatible with, the principles of *human* jurisprudence. And such attempts have proved unsatisfactory, first, because the Atonement is not a case of jurisprudence; and, secondly, because, if it were, the unique relationship of our Lord to men has no parallel in the issues of human courts of justice, and therefore analogies drawn from them must necessarily be either halting or misleading. It has been the error of theologians, and the cause of much futile discussion, that they have narrowed St. Paul's saying, "that He might Himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" to mean only *retributive* justice, and have then treated its vindication as a procedure appertaining to a court of law. The inappropriateness of a "propitiation," however defined, to any court of law should have been sufficient to deter them from a theological exercise so much beside the mark. So far, then, Mr. Balfour's criticism is reasonable; but it points to the misdirection of the inquiry, and not to its being illegitimate.

4. And, once more, it is contradictory to speak with Dr. Horton of the facts of redemption as being "a revelation of God's nature, which is otherwise unknown," and then to warn us off the task of finding the explanation of the facts. A fact which cannot explain the nature of Him who causes it, or be explained by it, may be almost anything. But one thing it cannot be, and that is the revelation—the unveiling or manifestation—of the nature, "otherwise unknown," by which it is caused. Dr. Horton's mistake is due to his having insisted upon the facts as being the revelation, while he has left out of account the revelation contained in the relations in which God stands to those whom the facts concern. The facts without the relations must remain mysterious. Even when the facts and the relations are taken together, the explanation of each by the other may be a difficult problem, requiring

much expenditure of thought and time. But it becomes at once a practical and practicable problem, the solution of which must be attempted undismayed by temporary failure or by delay. If, then, no connexion can be established between the relations and the fact, not only will there be no real revelation, but eventually all faith that there is such will perforce be abandoned.

That such a result will not happen, Dr. Horton's concluding statement clearly shows. The "preaching of Christ and Him crucified" has been the means of the spiritual transformation of untold multitudes of men. But why? Because it is "the truth—as truth is in Jesus." It is not an inexplicable fact, but only a fact which conveys truth, that can affect the spiritual life of men. It does so because of the divine reason within it. That reason may not be laid bare to the reflective consciousness of those who are moved by it. But it is there, implicit in the facts. And the power which it possesses to move men is the guarantee that it will, if challenged, yield up its meaning by degrees to patient seekers after it. Blank mystery does not move men, for their faith means insight. That insight may be dim, its first efforts to justify itself may be obscure, conflicting, and even partially misleading. But spiritual power can only come from inherent reason, and where reason is inherent there must be no despair of discovering and setting it forth.

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